

M. S.

WORDSWORTH

Poetry & Prose

SELECTED BY W. M. MERCHANT



RUPERT HART-DAVIS

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INTRODUCTION

WHEN Matthew Arnold made his selection of Wordsworth for the Golden Treasury series in 1879, he remarked: "To be recognised far and wide as a great poet, to be possible and receivable as a classic, Wordsworth needs to be relieved of a great deal of the poetical baggage which now encumbers him." And certainly few great writers have made less effective use of the waste-paper basket, though I have taken leave to doubt whether this selection need be as rigorous as Arnold's. He also rejected Wordsworth's arrangement of the poetry, because "Wordsworth classified the poems not according to any commonly received plan of arrangement, but according to a scheme of mental physiology. . . . His categories are ingenious but far-fetched." In the Preface to the collected edition of 1815, in which he first adopted this arrangement, Wordsworth explains it by reference not only to "mental physiology," but also to a combination of the "powers required for the production of poetry" and those categories or "moulds" in the classical forms (Lyric, Elegy, etc.) which Arnold adopted rigidly in his selection while charging Wordsworth with having neglected them. There is also a description of the pattern of his work in the Preface to *The Excursion*:

The two Works [*The Recluse* and *The Excursion*] have the same kind of relation to each other . . . as the Ante-chapel has to the body of a gothic Church. Continuing the allusion he [the Author] may be permitted to add, that his minor Pieces, which have been long before the Public, when they shall be properly arranged, will be found by the attentive Reader to have such connection with the main Work as may give them claim to be likened to the little Cells, Oratories, and sepulchral Recesses, ordinarily included in those Edifices.

This account of the organic relation of each part of his work to the other should help to absolve Wordsworth from the charge of a merely pedantic classification of his poems by reference to an ill-examined theory of poetic creation. But it seemed best to reject Wordsworth's arrangement here also, though on different grounds from Arnold's. If that arrangement is to have its full value, all the

INTRODUCTION

poems in each class must be studied together; this is obviously impossible in selection, but it can be done, with a wealth of variants and critical apparatus, in the complete edition of Ernest de Selincourt and Miss Helen Darbishire which it would be impertinent to praise.

I have therefore decided to make the arrangement chronological, without attempting to re-arrange the poems in such collections as *Poems in Two Volumes*, 1807, in the order of their composition. The selection is full enough to enable the reader to follow the growth of the poet's mind, an aim not alien to Wordsworth's intentions. And since the general arrangement is chronological, the earliest published text of each work has been used, except where otherwise indicated in the bibliographical notes at the beginning of each section. Christopher Wordsworth recorded the poet as saying: "I am for the most part uncertain about my success in *altering* poems," and it would be a bold man who, after examining and collating all the editions of Wordsworth's poems, dared to contradict him.

For the fulfilment of my plan I needed the 1805-06 version of *The Prelude*, since, although it was not published until 1926, it illustrates the poet's growth more accurately than does the text of 1850. By courtesy of the Clarendon Press and Professor de Selincourt's executors, I am able to print the earlier version here.

One or two further questions of arrangement call for notice:

The prose criticism has been grouped together and is virtually complete.

Certain elegiac pieces, closely related in form though widely separated in date of composition, have been collected under one heading.

Poems and prose about places have been grouped and printed together in order of composition. Those intersections of time and place which he describes in *The Prelude* had a lasting hold upon his creative mind:

There are in our existence spots of time,
Which with distinct pre-eminence retain
A vivifying virtue, whence . . .
In trivial occupations, and the round
Of ordinary intercourse, our minds
Are nourished and invisibly repaired.

This creative relationship has been recognised here by printing

together the Memorials of the Tours of 1803, 1814, 1820, 1831, 1833, and 1837, the Duddon Sonnets, the selection from *The Excursion* and the *Topographical Description of the Country of the Lakes*.

Evening Voluntaries, though also written over a period of some fifteen years, are closely enough related to justify their being grouped together.

Other exceptions to a strict chronology are mentioned in the bibliographical notes, where the reader will also find many quotations from the "Fenwick Notes." These were dictated by Wordsworth in 1843 to his friend Isabella Fenwick, quoted extensively by the poet's nephew in his *Memoirs of William Wordsworth* (1851) and first published in full in the *Poetical Works* of 1857. They are gossipy and informative, with occasional moments of great critical insight. But while they are valuable indications of the mood and occasions of his writings (or his mature reflections on those creative periods) their dates and facts are not always reliable.

It was difficult to decide on omissions. Some will regret *Peter Bell's* absence; others may have wished for even greater severity with the *Lyrical Ballads*. The inclusion of the whole of *The Prelude* involved cutting *The Excursion*; retaining the first book in its entirety was to me an obvious choice. It seemed justifiable to represent the immature but interesting play *The Borderers* by a brief selection, together with its Preface. I most regret omitting *The White Doe of Rylstone*; that very fine poem could not be represented adequately in selection and there was no room for the whole.

Obvious slips and misprints have been silently corrected to agree with later editions. Titles supplied by the poet at a later date have been enclosed within square brackets.

I am indebted to many people: first to Mr. Rupert Hart-Davis whose patient scholarship has led me past innumerable pitfalls; to Miss C. M. Maclean who started me on my Wordsworth studies; to my friends and colleagues in the University College, Cardiff, Professor Oliver de Selincourt, Professor E. C. Llewellyn and Dr. S. L. Bethell, for their ungrudging good offices; and to Mr. Richard Garnett whose assistance has been unfaltering. I am grateful for the opportunity of paying tribute to Humphry House who interested himself in this book from the beginning; his recent death is a deplorable loss to critical scholarship.

W. M. MERCHANT

CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE

1770	7 April: Birth of William, second son of John Wordsworth, attorney, of Cockermouth, and Anne, daughter of William Cookson of Penrith.
1778	Wordsworth's mother dies. Attends Hawkshead Grammar School.
1788	Wordsworth's father dies.
1786	Writes "Dear native regions" and "Calm is all Nature."
1787	Enters St. John's College, Cambridge. <i>Evening Walk</i> begun.
1789	<i>Evening Walk</i> finished.
1790	Walking tour with Robert Jones through France and Switzerland.
1791	Graduates B.A. November: goes to Paris, Orleans. <i>Descriptive Sketches</i> and <i>Guilt and Sorrow</i> begun.
1792	Orleans, Blois. Love for Marie Anne Vallon (Annette). Paris (October) friendship with Girondins. Return to England. 15 December: natural daughter (Caroline) born. <i>Descriptive Sketches</i> finished.
1793	<i>Evening Walk</i> and <i>Descriptive Sketches</i> published. Writes <i>Letter to the Bishop of Llandaff</i> .
1794	<i>Guilt and Sorrow</i> finished.
1795	Legacy from Raisley Calvert. Settles at Racedown. Meets Coleridge. <i>The Borderers</i> begun.
1796	<i>The Borderers</i> finished.
1797	Settles at Alfoxden with Dorothy, near Coleridge at Nether Stowey.
1798	<i>Lyrical Ballads</i> published. To Hamburg and Goslar.
1799	Settles with Dorothy at Dove Cottage, Grasmere.
1800	Second (enlarged) edition of <i>Lyrical Ballads</i>
1802	Visits Annette and Caroline at Calais. 4 October: marries Mary Hutchinson. <i>Lyrical Ballads</i> third edition.
1805	5 February: John Wordsworth drowned.
1806	<i>The Prelude</i> finished.
1807	At Coleorton (Sir George Beaumont). <i>Poems in Two Volumes</i> published.
1808	Settles at Allan Bank.
1809	<i>Convention of Cintra</i> published. Writes for Coleridge's <i>The Friend</i> .
1810	<i>Essay upon Epitaphs</i> in <i>The Friend</i> . <i>Guide to the Lakes</i> published as anonymous Introduction to Wilkinson's <i>Select Views</i> .
1813	Appointed Stamp-Distributor for Westmorland. Moves to Rydal Mount.

CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE

1814	<i>The Excursion</i> published.
1815	<i>Poems</i> (first collective edition, two volumes) and <i>The White Doe of Rylstone</i> published.
1819	J.P. for Westmorland. <i>Peter Bell</i> and <i>The Waggoner</i> published.
1820	Tour in Switzerland and Italy. <i>The River Duddon</i> published. <i>Miscellaneous Poems</i> (four volumes), <i>The Excursion</i> (second edition) published.
1822	<i>Memorials of a Tour on the Continent, 1820, Ecclesiastical Sketches, Topographical Description of the Country of the Lakes</i> published.
1827	<i>Poetical Works</i> in five volumes published.
1828	Rhineland tour.
1831	Visits Scott at Abbotsford. Highland tour.
1832	<i>Poetical Works</i> in four volumes.
1833	Tour in Isle of Man and Scotland.
1835	<i>Yarrow Revisited</i> published.
1836– 37	<i>Poetical Works</i> in six volumes. Tour through France and Italy.
1838	<i>The Sonnets</i> published in one volume.
1839	D.C.L. Oxford.
1842	<i>Poems, Chiefly of Early and Late Years</i> published. Resigns Stamp-Distributorship. Civil List pension.
1843	Poet Laureate, April.
1845	One-volume edition of <i>Poetical Works</i> . <i>Kendal and Windermere Railway, Two Letters reprinted from the Morning Post</i> , published.
1849– 50	<i>Poetical Works</i> in six volumes.
1850	23 April: dies. <i>The Prelude</i> published.

AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL MEMORANDA

Autobiographical Memoranda first appeared in *Memoirs of William Wordsworth* by Christopher Wordsworth, 1851, from which this text is taken.

AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL MEMORANDA

Dictated by WILLIAM WORDSWORTH, P.L.,
AT RYDAL MOUNT,
NOVEMBER, 1847

I WAS born at Cockermouth, in Cumberland, on April 7th, 1770, the second son of John Wordsworth, attorney-at-law, as lawyers of this class were then called, and law-agent to Sir James Lowther, afterwards Earl of Lonsdale. My mother was Anne, only daughter of William Cookson, mercer, of Penrith, and of Dorothy, born Crackanthorp, of the ancient family of that name, who from the times of Edward the Third had lived in Newbiggen Hall, Westmoreland. My grandfather was the first of the name of Wordsworth who came into Westmoreland, where he purchased the small estate of Sockbridge. He was descended from a family who had been settled at Peniston in Yorkshire, near the sources of the Don, probably before the Norman Conquest. Their names appear on different occasions in all the transactions, personal and public, connected with that parish; and I possess, through the kindness of Col. Beaumont, an almetry made in 1525, at the expense of a William Wordsworth, as is expressed in a Latin inscription carved upon it, which carries the pedigree of the family back four generations from himself.

The time of my infancy and early boyhood was passed partly at Cockermouth, and partly with my mother's parents at Penrith, where my mother, in the year 1778, died of a decline, brought on by a cold, the consequence of being put, at a friend's house in London, in what used to be called "a best bedroom." My father never recovered his usual cheerfulness of mind after this loss, and died when I was in my fourteenth year, a schoolboy, just returned from Hawkshead, whither I had been sent with my elder brother Richard, in my ninth year.

I remember my mother only in some few situations, one of which was her pinning a nosegay to my breast when I was going to say the catechism in the church, as was customary before Easter. I remember also telling her on one week day that I had been at church, for our school stood in the churchyard, and we had frequent opportunities of seeing what was going on there. The occasion

was, a woman doing penance in the church in a white sheet. My mother commended my having been present, expressing a hope that I should remember the circumstance for the rest of my life. "But," said I, "Mama, they did not give me a penny, as I had been told they would." "Oh," said she, recanting her praises, "if that was your motive, you were very properly disappointed."

My last impression was having a glimpse of her on passing the door of her bedroom during her last illness, when she was reclining in her easy chair. An intimate friend of hers, Miss Hamilton by name, who was used to visit her at Cockermouth, told me that she once said to her, that the only one of her five children about whose future life she was anxious, was William; and he, she said, would be remarkable either for good or for evil. The cause of this was, that I was of a stiff, moody, and violent temper; so much so that I remember going once into the attics of my grandfather's house at Penrith, upon some indignity having been put upon me, with an intention of destroying myself with one of the foils which I knew was kept there. I took the foil in hand, but my heart failed. Upon another occasion, while I was at my grandfather's house at Penrith, along with my eldest brother, Richard, we were whipping tops together in the large drawing-room, on which the carpet was only laid down upon particular occasions. The walls were hung round with family pictures, and I said to my brother, "Dare you strike your whip through that old lady's petticoat?" He replied, "No, I won't." "Then," said I, "here goes;" and I struck my lash through her hooped petticoat, for which no doubt, though I have forgotten it, I was properly punished. But possibly, from some want of judgment in punishments inflicted, I had become perverse and obstinate in defying chastisement, and rather proud of it than otherwise.

Of my earliest days at school I have little to say, but that they were very happy ones, chiefly because I was left at liberty, then and in the vacations, to read whatever books I liked. For example, I read all Fieldings' works, Don Quixote, Gil Blas, and any part of Swift that I liked; Gulliver's Travels, and the Tale of the Tub, being both much to my taste. I was very much indebted to one of the ushers of Hawkeshead School, by name Shaw, who taught me more of Latin in a fortnight than I had learnt during two preceding years at the school of Cockermouth. Unfortunately for me this excellent master left our school, and went to Stafford, where he taught for many years. It may be perhaps as well to mention, that the first

verses which I wrote were a task imposed by my master; the subject, "The Summer Vacation;" and of my own accord I added others upon "Return to School." There was nothing remarkable in either poem; but I was called upon, among other scholars, to write verses upon the completion of the second centenary from the foundation of the school in 1585, by Archbishop Sandys. These verses were much admired, far more than they deserved, for they were but a tame imitation of Pope's versification, and a little in his style. This exercise, however, put it into my head to compose verses from the impulse of my own mind, and I wrote, while yet a schoolboy, a long poem running upon my own adventures, and the scenery of the country in which I was brought up. The only part of that poem which has been preserved is the conclusion of it, which stands at the beginning of my collected Poems.¹

In the month of October, 1787, I was sent to St. John's College, Cambridge, of which my uncle, Dr. Cookson, had been a fellow. The master, Dr. Chevallier, died very soon after; and, according to the custom of that time, his body, after being placed in the coffin, was removed to the hall of the college, and the pall, spread over the coffin, was stuck over by copies of verses, English or Latin, the composition of the students of St. John's. My uncle seemed mortified when upon inquiry he learnt that none of these verses were from my pen, "because," said he, "it would have been a fair opportunity for distinguishing yourself." I did not, however, regret that I had been silent on this occasion, as I felt no interest in the deceased person, with whom I had had no intercourse, and whom I had never seen but during his walks in the college grounds.

When at school, I, with the other boys of the same standing, was put upon reading the first six books of Euclid, with the exception of the fifth; and also in algebra I learnt simple and quadratic equations; and this was for me unlucky, because I had a full twelvemonth's start of the freshmen of my year, and accordingly got into rather an idle way; reading nothing but classic authors according to my fancy, and Italian poetry. My Italian master was named Isola, and had been well acquainted with Gray the poet. As I took to these studies with much interest, he was proud of the progress I made. Under his correction I translated the Vision of Mirza and two or three other papers of the Spectator, into Italian. In the month of August, 1790, I set off for the Continent, in companionship with Robert Jones, a Welshman, a fellow-collegian.

¹ "Dear native Regions." See p. 31.

We went staff in hand, without knapsacks, and carrying each his needments tied up in a pocket handkerchief, with about twenty pounds apiece in our pockets. We crossed from Dover and landed at Calais on the eve of the day when the king was to swear fidelity to the new constitution: an event which was solemnised with due pomp at Calais. On the afternoon of that day we started, and slept at Ardres. For what seemed best to me worth recording in this tour, see the Poem of my own Life.¹

After taking my degree in January, 1791, I went to London, stayed there some time, and then visited my friend Jones, who resided in the Vale of Clwydd, North Wales. Along with him I made a pedestrian tour through North Wales, for which also see the Poem.

In the autumn of 1791 I went to Paris, where I stayed some little time, and then went to Orleans, with a view of being out of the way of my own countrymen, that I might learn to speak the language fluently. At Orleans, and Blois, and Paris, on my return, I passed fifteen or sixteen months. It was a stirring time. The king was dethroned when I was at Blois, and the massacres of September took place when I was at Orleans. But for these matters see also the Poem. I came home before the execution of the king, and passed the subsequent time among my friends in London and elsewhere, till I settled with my only sister at Racedown in Dorsetshire, in the year 1796.

Here we were visited by Mr. Coleridge, then residing at Bristol; and for the sake of being near him when he had removed to Nether-Stowey, in Somersetshire, we removed to Alfoxden, three miles from that place. This was a very pleasant and productive time of my life. Coleridge, my sister, and I, set off on a tour to Linton and other places in Devonshire; and in order to defray his part of the expense, Coleridge on the same afternoon commenced his poem of the Ancient Mariner, in which I was to have borne my part, and a few verses were written by me, and some assistance given in planning the poem; but our styles agreed so little, that I withdrew from the concern, and he finished it himself.

In the course of that spring I composed many poems, most of which were printed at Bristol, in one volume, by my friend Joseph Cottle, along with Coleridge's Ancient Mariner, and two or three other of his pieces.

In the autumn of 1798, Mr. Coleridge, a friend of his Mr.

¹ *The Prelude.*

Chester, my sister, and I, crossed from Yarmouth to Hamburgh, where we remained a few days, and saw, several times, Klopstock the poet. Mr. Coleridge and his friend went to Ratzburg, in the north of Germany, and my sister and I preferred going southward; and for the sake of cheapness, and the neighbourhood of the Hartz Mountains, we spent the winter at the old imperial city of Goslar. The winter was perishingly cold—the coldest of this century; and the good people with whom we lodged told me one morning, that they expected to find me frozen to death, my little sleeping room being immediately over an archway. However, neither my sister nor I took any harm.

We returned to England in the following spring, and went to visit our friends the Hutchinsons, at Sockburn-on-Tees, in the county of Durham, with whom we remained till the 19th of December. We then came, on St. Thomas's Day, the 21st, to a small cottage at Town-end, Grasmere, which, in the course of a tour some months previously with Mr. Coleridge, I had been pleased with, and had hired. This we furnished for about a hundred pounds, which sum had come to my sister by a legacy from her uncle Crackanthorp.

I fell to composition immediately, and published, in 1800, the second volume of the Lyrical Ballads.

In the year 1802 I married Mary Hutchinson, at Brompton, near Scarborough, to which part of the country the family had removed from Sockburn. We had known each other from childhood, and had practised reading and spelling under the same old dame at Penrith, a remarkable personage, who had taught three generations, of the upper classes principally, of the town of Penrith and its neighbourhood.

After our marriage we dwelt, together with our sister, at Townend, where three of our children were born. In the spring of 1808, the increase of our family caused us to remove to a larger house, then just built, Allan Bank, in the same vale; where our two younger children were born, and who died at the rectory, the house we afterwards occupied for two years. They died in 1812, and in 1813 we came to Rydal Mount, where we have since lived with no further sorrow till 1835, when my sister became a confirmed invalid, and our sister Sarah Hutchinson died. She lived alternately with her brother and with us.

POEMS WRITTEN IN YOUTH

The *Extract* was written in 1787 and published in 1815.

Written in Very Early Youth was published in the *Morning Post*, 13 February 1802, and in *Poems in Two Volumes*, 1807.

Lines Written when Sailing in a Boat at Evening and *Remembrance of Collins* were written in 1789 and published in *Lyrical Ballads* (1798), where they formed one poem entitled *Lines written near Richmond, upon the Thames, at evening*. Wordsworth says in the Fenwick Note that "upon the recommendation of Coleridge, the three last stanzas were separated from the others," and they have been so printed here, in the text of 1800.

Lines left upon a Seat in a Yew-Tree was begun in 1787 and published in 1798. It is here printed in the text of 1800.

POEMS WRITTEN IN YOUTH

Extract

FROM THE CONCLUSION OF A POEM, COMPOSED
UPON LEAVING SCHOOL

DEAR native Regions, I foretell
From what I feel at this farewell,
That, wheresoe'er my steps may tend,
And whensoe'er my course shall end,
If in that hour a single tie
Survive of local sympathy,
My soul will cast the backward view,
The longing look alone on you.

Thus, when the Sun, prepared for rest,
Hath gained the precincts of the West,
Though his departing radiance fail
To illuminate the hollow Vale,
A lingering light he fondly throws
On the dear Hills where first he rose.

Written in Very Early Youth

CALM is all nature as a resting wheel.
The Kine are couch'd upon the dewy grass;
The Horse alone, seen dimly as I pass,
Is up, and cropping yet his later meal:
Dark is the ground; a slumber seems to steal
O'er vale, and mountain, and the starless sky.
Now, in this blank of things, a harmony
Home-felt, and home-created seems to heal
That grief for which the senses still supply
Fresh food; for only then, when memory
Is hush'd, am I at rest. My Friends, restrain
Those busy cares that would allay my pain:
Oh! leave me to myself; nor let me feel
The officious touch that makes me droop again.

Lines

WRITTEN WHEN SAILING IN A BOAT AT EVENING

How rich the wave, in front, imprest
 With evening twilight's summer hues,
 While, facing thus the crimson west,
 The boat her silent path pursues!
 And see how dark the backward stream!
 A little moment past, so smiling!
 And still, perhaps, with faithless gleam,
 Some other loiterer beguiling.

Such views the youthful bard allure,
 But, heedless of the following gloom,
 He deems their colours shall endure
 Till peace go with him to the tomb.
 —And let him nurse his fond deceit,
 And what if he must die in sorrow!
 Who would not cherish dreams so sweet,
 Though grief and pain may come tomorrow?

[*Remembrance of Collins*]

LINES WRITTEN NEAR RICHMOND UPON THE THAMES

GLIDE gently, thus for ever glide,
 O Thames! that other bards may see
 As lovely visions by thy side
 As now, fair river! come to me.
 Oh glide, fair stream! for ever so;
 Thy quiet soul on all bestowing,
 Till all our minds for ever flow,
 As thy deep waters now are flowing.

Vain thought! yet be as now thou art,
 That in thy waters may be seen
 The image of a poet's heart,
 How bright, how solemn, how serene!

Such as did once the poet bless,
 Who, pouring here a later ditty,¹
 Could find no refuge from distress,
 But in the milder grief of pity.

Remembrance! as we float along,
 For him suspend the dashing oar,
 And pray that never child of Song
 May know his freezing sorrows more.
 How calm! how still! the only sound,
 The dripping of the oar suspended!
 —The evening darkness gathers round
 By virtue's holiest powers attended.

Lines

LEFT UPON A SEAT IN A YEW-TREE,
 WHICH STANDS NEAR THE LAKE OF ESTHWAITE,
 ON A DESOLATE PART OF THE SHORE,
 YET COMMANDING A BEAUTIFUL PROSPECT

—**N**AY, Traveller! rest. This lonely yew-tree stands
 Far from all human dwelling: what if here
 No sparkling rivulet spread the verdant herb;
 What if these barren boughs the bee not loves;
 Yet, if the wind breathe soft, the curling waves,
 That break against the shore, shall lull thy mind
 By one soft impulse saved from vacancy.

—————Who he was
 That plied these stones, and with the mossy sod
 First covered o'er and taught this aged tree
 With its dark arms to form a circling bower,
 I well remember.—He was one who owned
 No common soul. In youth by science nursed
 And led by nature into a wild scene
 Of lofty hopes, he to the world went forth,
 A favored being, knowing no desire
 Which genius did not hallow, 'gainst the taint
 Of dissolute tongues, and jealousy, and hate
 And scorn, against all enemies prepared.

¹ Collins's Ode on the death of Thomson, the last written, I believe, of the poems which were published during his life-time. This Ode is also alluded to in the next stanza.

All but neglect. The world, for so it thought,
 Owed him no service: he was like a plant
 Fair to the sun, the darling of the winds,
 But hung with fruit which no one, that passed by,
 Regarded, and, his spirit damped at once,
 With indignation did he turn away
 And with the food of pride sustained his soul
 In solitude.—Stranger! these gloomy boughs
 Had charms for him; and here he loved to sit,
 His only visitants a straggling sheep,
 The stone-chat, or the glancing sand-piper;
 And on these barren rocks, with juniper,
 And heath, and thistle, thinly sprinkled o'er,
 Fixing his downcast eye, he many an hour
 A morbid pleasure nourished, tracing here
 An emblem of his own unfruitful life:
 And lifting up his head, he then would gaze
 On the more distant scene; how lovely 'tis
 Thou seest, and he would gaze till it became
 Far lovelier, and his heart could not sustain
 The beauty still more beauteous. Nor, that time
 When Nature had subdued him to herself,
 Would he forget those beings, to whose minds,
 Warm from the labours of benevolence,
 The world, and man himself, appeared a scene
 Of kindred loveliness: then he would sigh
 With mournful joy, to think that others felt
 What he must never feel: and so, lost man!
 On visionary views would fancy feed,
 Till his eye streamed with tears. In this deep vale
 He died, this seat his only monument.

If thou be one whose heart the holy forms
 Of young imagination have kept pure,
 Stranger! henceforth be warned; and know, that pride,
 Howe'er disguised in its own majesty,
 Is littleness; that he, who feels contempt
 For any living thing, hath faculties
 Which he has never used; that thought with him
 Is in its infancy. The man, whose eye
 Is ever on himself, doth look on one,

The least of nature's works, one who might move
The wise man to that scorn which wisdom holds
Unlawful, ever. O, be wiser thou!
Instructed that true knowledge leads to love,
True dignity abides with him alone
Who, in the silent hour of inward thought,
Can still suspect, and still revere himself,
In lowliness of heart.

AN EVENING WALK

*Library Sri Pratap College,
Srinagar.*

An Evening Walk. An Epistle; In Verse. Addressed to a Young Lady, From the Lakes of the North of England. By W. Wordsworth, B.A., of St. John's, Cambridge. London: Printed for J. Johnson, St. Paul's Church-Yard, 1793.

In the Fenwick Note Wordsworth says:

It was composed at school, and during my two first College vacations. There is not an image in it which I have not observed; and now, in my seventy-third year, I recollect the time and place where most of them were noticed.

AN EVENING WALK

ARGUMENT

General Sketch of the Lakes—Author's Regret of his Youth passed amongst them—Short description of Noon—Cascade Scene—Noon-tide Retreat—Precipice and Sloping Lights—Face of Nature as the Sun declines—Mountain Farm, and the Cock—Slate Quarry—Sunset—Superstition of the Country, connected with that Moment—Swans—Female Beggar—Twilight Objects—Twilight Sounds—Western Lights—Spirits—Night—Moonlight—Hope—Night Sounds—Conclusions.

FAR from my dearest friend, 'tis mine to rove
Thro' bare grey dell, high wood, and pastoral cove;
His wizard course where hoary Derwent takes
Thro' craggs, and forest glooms, and opening lakes,
Staying his silent waves, to hear the roar
That stuns the tremulous cliffs of high Lodore:
Where silver rocks the savage prospect chear
Of giant yews that frown on Rydale's mere;
Where peace to Grasmere's lonely island leads,
To willowy hedgerows, and to emerald meads;
Leads to her bridge, rude church, and cottag'd grounds,
Her rocky sheepwalks, and her woodland bounds;
Where, bosom'd deep, the shy Winander¹ peeps
'Mid clust'ring isles, and holly-sprinkl'd steeps;
Where twilight glens endear my Esthwaite's shore,
And memory of departed pleasures, more.

Fair scenes! with other eyes, than once, I gaze,
The ever-varying charm your round displays,
Than when, ere-while, I taught, "a happy child,"
The echoes of your rocks my carols wild:
Then did no ebb of cheerfulness demand
Sad tides of joy from Melancholy's hand;
In youth's wild eye the livelong day was bright,
The sun at morning, and the stars of night,
Alike, when first the vales the bittern fills,
Or the first woodcocks² roam'd the moonlight hills.

¹ These lines are only applicable to the middle part of that lake.

² In the beginning of winter, these mountains, in the moonlight nights, are covered with immense quantities of woodcocks; which, in the dark nights, retire into the woods.

Return Delights! with whom my road begun,
 When Life rear'd laughing up her morning sun;
 When Transport kiss'd away my april tear,
 "Rocking as in a dream the tedious year;"
 When link'd with thoughtless Mirth I cours'd the plain,
 And hope itself was all I knew of pain.
 For then, ev'n then, the little heart would beat
 At times, while young Content forsook her seat,
 And wild Impatience, panting upward, show'd
 Where tipp'd with gold the mountain-summits glow'd.
 Alas! the idle tale of man is found
 Depicted in the dial's moral round;
 With Hope Reflexion blends her social rays
 To gild the total tablet of his days;
 Yet still, the sport of some malignant Pow'r,
 He knows but from its shade the present hour.
 While, Memory at my side, I wander here,
 Starts at the simplest sight th' unbidden tear,
 A form discover'd at the well-known seat,
 A spot, that angles at the riv'let's feet,
 The ray the cot of morning trav'ling nigh,
 And sail that glides the well-known alders by.

But why, ungrateful, dwell on idle pain?
 To shew her yet some joys to me remain,
 Say, will my friend, with soft affection's ear,
 The history of a poet's ev'ning hear?

When, in the south, the wan noon brooding still,
 Breath'd a pale steam around the glaring hill,
 And shades of deep embattl'd clouds were seen
 Spotting the northern cliffs with lights between;
 Gazing the tempting shades to them deny'd,
 When stood the shorten'd herds amid the tide,
 Where, from the barren wall's unshelter'd end,
 Long rails into the shallow lake extend;
 When school-boys stretch'd their length upon the green,
 And round the humming elm, a glimmering scene!
 In the brown park, in flocks, the troubl'd deer
 Shook the still twinkling tail and glancing ear;

When horses in the wall-girt intake¹ stood,
Unshaded, eyeing far below, the flood,
Crouded behind the swain, in mute distress,
With forward neck the closing gate to press;
And long, with wistful gaze, his walk survey'd,
Till dipp'd his pathway in the river shade;

—Then Quiet led me up the huddling rill,
Bright'ning with water-breaks the sombrous gill²;
To where, while thick above the branches close,
In dark-brown bason its wild waves repose,
Inverted shrubs, and moss of darkest green,
Cling from the rocks, with pale wood-weeds between;
Save that, atop, the subtle sunbeams shine,
On wither'd briars that o'er the craggs recline;
Sole light admitted here, a small cascade,
Illumes with sparkling foam the twilight shade.
Beyond, along the visto of the brook,
Where antique roots its bustling path o'erlook,
The eye reposes on a secret bridge³
Half grey, half shagg'd with ivy to its ridge.

—Sweet rill, farewell! To-morrow's noon again,
Shall hide me wooing long thy wildwood strain;
But now the sun has gain'd his western road,
And eve's mild hour invites my steps abroad.

While, near the midway cliff, the silver'd kite
In many a whistling circle wheels her flight;
Slant wat'ry lights, from parting clouds a-pace,
Travel along the precipice's base;
Chearing its naked waste of scatter'd stone
By lichens grey, and scanty moss o'ergrown,
Where scarce the foxglove peeps, and thistle's beard,
And desert stone-chat, all day long, is heard.

How pleasant, as the yellowing sun declines,
And with long rays and shades the landscape shines;

¹ The word *intake* is local, and signifies a mountain-inclosure.

² Gill is also, I believe, a term confined to this country. Glen, gill, and dingle, have the same meaning.

³ The reader, who has made the tour of this country, will recognize, in this description, the features which characterize the lower waterfall in the gardens of Rydale.

To mark the birches' stems all golden light,
 That lit the dark slant woods with silvery white!
 The willows weeping trees, that twinkling hoar,
 Glanc'd oft upturn'd along the breezy shore,
 Low bending o'er the colour'd water, fold
 Their moveless boughs and leaves like threads of gold;
 The skiffs with naked masts at anchor laid,
 Before the boat-house peeping thro' the shade;
 Th' unwearied glance of woodman's echo'd stroke;
 And curling from the trees the cottage smoke.

Their pannier'd train a groupe of potters goad,
 Winding from side to side up the steep road;
 The peasant from yon cliff of fearful edge
 Shot, down the headlong pathway darts his sledge;
 Bright beams the lonely mountain horse illumine,
 Feeding 'mid purple heath, "green rings,"¹ and broom;
 While the sharp slope the slacken'd team confounds,
 Downward² the pond'rous timber-wain resounds;
 Beside their sheltering cross³ of wall, the flock
 Feeds on in light, nor thinks of winter's shock;
 In foamy breaks the rill, with merry song,
 Dash'd down the rough rock, lightly leaps along;
 From lonesome chapel at the mountain's feet,
 Three humble bells their rustic chime repeat;
 Sounds from the water-side the hammer'd boat;
 And blasted quarry thunders heard remote.

Ev'n here, amid the sweep of endless woods,
 Blue pomp of lakes, high cliffs, and falling floods,
 Not undelightful are the simplest charms
 Found by the verdant door of mountain farms.

Sweetly⁴ ferocious round his native walks,
 Gaz'd by his sister-wives, the monarch stalks;

¹ "Vivid rings of green." GREENWOOD'S Poem on Shooting.

² "Down the rough slope the pond'rous waggon rings." BEATTIE.

³ These rude structures, to protect the flocks, are frequent in this country: the traveller may recollect one in Withburne, another upon Whinlatter.

⁴ "Dolcemente feroce." TASSO. In this description of the cock, I remember a spirited one of the same animal in the *l'Agriculture ou Les Georgiques Françaises*, of M. Rossuet.

Spur clad his nervous feet, and firm his tread,
 A crest of purple tops his warrior head.
 Bright sparks his black and haggard eye-ball hurls
 Afar, his tail he closes and unfurls;
 Whose state, like pine-trees, waving to and fro,
 Droops, and o'er canopies his regal brow,
 On tiptoe rear'd he blows his clarion throat,
 Threaten'd by faintly answering farms remote.

Bright'ning the cliffs between where sombrous pine,
 And yew-trees o'er the silver rocks recline,
 I love to mark the quarry's moving trains,
 Dwarf pannier'd steeds, and men, and numerous wains:
 How busy the enormous hive within,
 While Echo dallies with the various din!
 Some hardly heard their chissel's clinking sound,
 Toil, small as pigmies, in the gulph profound;
 Some, dim between th' aëreal cliffs descry'd,
 O'erwalk the viewless plank from side to side;
 These by the pale-blue rocks that ceaseless ring
 Glad from their airy baskets hang and sing.

Hung o'er a cloud, above the steep that rears
 It's edge all flame, the broad'ning sun appears;
 A long blue bar it's ægis orb divides,
 And breaks the spreading of it's golden tides;
 And now it touches on the purple steep
 That flings his shadow on the pictur'd deep.
 Cross the calm lake's blue shades the cliffs aspire,
 With tow'rs and woods a "prospect all on fire;"
 The coves and secret hollows thro' a ray
 Of fainter gold a purple gleam betray;
 The gilded turf arrays in richer green
 Each speck of lawn the broken rocks between;
 Deep yellow beams the scatter'd boles illume,
 Far in the level forest's central gloom;
 Waving his hat, the shepherd in the vale
 Directs his winding dog the cliffs to scale,
 That, barking busy 'mid the glittering rocks,
 Hunts, where he points, the intercepted flocks;
 Where oaks o'erhang the road the radiance shoots

AN EVENING WALK

On tawny earth, wild weeds, and twisted roots;
The Druid¹ stones their lighted fane unfold,
And all the babbling brooks are liquid gold;
Sunk to a curve the day-star lessens still,²
Gives one bright glance, and sinks behind the hill.

In these lone vales, if aught of faith may claim,
Thin silver hairs, and ancient hamlet fame;
When up the hills, as now, retreats the light,
Strange apparitions mock the village sight.

A desperate form appears, that spurs his steed,
Along the midway cliffs with violent speed;
Unhurt pursues his lengthen'd flight, while all
Attend, at every stretch, his headlong fall.
Anon, in order mounts a gorgeous show
Of horsemen shadows winding to and fro;
And now the van is gilt with evening's beam,
The rear thro' iron brown betrays a sullen gleam;
Lost gradual o'er the heights in pomp they go,³
While silent stands th' admiring vale below;
Till, but the lonely beacon all is fled,
That tips with eve's last gleam his spiry head.

Now while the solemn evening Shadows sail,
On red slow-waving pinions down the vale,
And, fronting the bright west in stronger lines,
The oak its dark'ning boughs and foliage twines,
I love beside the glowing lake to stray,
Where winds the road along the secret bay;
By rills that tumble down the woody steeps,
And run in transport to the dimpling deeps;
Along the "wild meand'ring shore" to view,

¹ Not far from Broughton is a Druid monument, of which I do not recollect that any tour descriptive of this country makes mention. Perhaps this poem may fall into the hands of some curious traveller, who may thank me for informing him, that up the Duddon, the river which forms the æstuary at Broughton, may be found some of the most romantic scenery of these mountains.

² From Thomson: see Scott's Critical Essays.

³ See a description of an appearance of this kind in Clark's Survey of the Lakes, accompanied with vouchers of its veracity, that may amuse the reader.

Obsequious Grace the winding swan pursue.
 He swells his lifted chest, and backward flings
 His bridling neck between his tow'ring wings;
 Stately, and burning in his pride, divides
 And glorying looks around, the silent tides:
 On as he floats, the silver'd waters glow,
 Proud of the varying arch and moveless form of snow.
 While tender Cares and mild domestic Loves,
 With furtive watch pursue her as she moves;
 The female with a meeker charm succeeds,
 And her brown little ones around her leads,
 Nibbling the water lilies as they pass;
 Or playing wanton with the floating grass:
 She in a mother's care, her beauty's pride
 Forgets, unwearied watching every side,
 She calls them near, and with affection sweet
 Alternately relieves their weary feet;
 Alternately they mount her back, and rest¹
 Close by her mantling wings' embraces prest.

Long may ye roam these hermit waves that sleep,
 In birch besprinkl'd cliffs embosom'd deep;
 These fairy holms untrodden, still, and green,
 Whose shades protect the hidden wave serene;
 Whence fragrance scents the water's desert gale,
 The violet, and the lily of the vale;²
 Where, tho' her far-off twilight ditty steal,
 They not the trip of harmless milkmaid feel.

Yon tuft conceals your home, your cottage bow'r,
 Fresh water rushes strew the verdant floor;
 Long grass and willows form the woven wall,
 And swings above the roof the poplar tall.
 Thence issuing oft, unwieldly as ye stalk,
 Ye crush with broad black feet your flow'ry walk;
 Safe from your door ye hear at breezy morn,
 The hound, the horse's tread, and mellow horn;
 At peace inverted your lithe necks ye lave,

¹ This is a fact of which I have been an eye-witness.

² The lily of the valley is found in great abundance in the smaller islands of Winandermere.

AN EVENING WALK

With the green bottom strewing o'er the wave;
No ruder sound your desert haunts invades,
Than waters dashing wild, or rocking shades.
Ye ne'er, like hapless human wanderers, throw
Your young on winter's winding sheet of snow.

Fair swan! by all a mother's joys caress'd,
Haply some wretch has ey'd, and call'd thee bless'd;
Who faint, and beat by summer's breathless ray,
Hath dragg'd her babes along this weary way;
While arrowy fire extorting feverish groans
Shot stinging through her stark o'er-labour'd bones.
—With backward gaze, lock'd joints, and step of pain,
Her seat scarce left, she strives, alas! in vain,
To teach their limbs along the burning road
A few short steps to totter with their load,
Shakes her numb arm that slumbers with its weight,
And eyes through tears the mountain's shadeless height;
And bids her soldier some her woes to share,
Asleep on Minden's charnel plain¹ afar;
For hope's deserted well why wistful look?
Chok'd is the pathway, and the pitcher broke.

I see her now, deny'd to lay her head,
On cold blue nights, in hut or straw-built shed;
Turn to a silent smile their sleepy cry,
By pointing to a shooting star on high:
I hear, while in the forest depth he sees,
The Moon's fix'd gaze between the opening trees,
In broken sounds her elder grief demand,
And skyward lift, like one that prays, his hand,
If, in that country, where he dwells afar,
His father views that good, that kindly star;
—Ah me! all light is mute amid the gloom,
The interlunar cavern of the tomb.
—When low-hung clouds each star of summer hide,
And fireless are the valleys far and wide,
Where the brook brawls along the painful road,

¹ [In *Errata*, in the edition of 1793, these words are changed to "Bunker's charnel hill".]

Dark with bat haunted ashes stretching broad,
The distant clock forgot, and chilling dew,
Pleas'd thro' the dusk their breaking smiles to view,
Oft has she taught them on her lap to play
Delighted, with the glow-worm's harmless ray
Toss'd light from hand to hand; while on the ground
Small circles of green radiance gleam around.

Oh! when the bitter showers her path assail,
And roars between the hills the torrent gale,
—No more her breath can thaw their fingers cold,
Their frozen arms her neck no more can fold;
Scarce heard, their chattering lips her shoulder chill,
And her cold back their colder bosoms thrill;
All blind she wilders o'er the lightless heath,
Led by Fear's cold wet hand, and dogg'd by Death;
Death, as she turns her neck the kiss to seek,
Breaks off the dreadful kiss with angry shriek.
Snatch'd from her shoulder with despairing moan,
She clasps them at that dim-seen roofless stone.—
“Now ruthless Tempest launch thy deadliest dart!
Fall fires—but let us perish heart to heart.”
Weak roof a cow'ring form two babes to shield,
And faint the fire a dying heart can yield;
Press the sad kiss, fond mother! vainly fears
Thy flooded cheek to wet them with its tears;
Soon shall the Light'ning hold before thy head
His torch, and shew them slumbering in their bed,
No tears can chill them, and no bosom warms,
Thy breast their death-bed, coffin'd in thine arms.

Sweet are the sounds that mingle from afar,
Heard by calm lakes, as peeps the folding star,
Where the duck dabbles mid the rustling sedge,
And feeding pike starts from the water's edge,
Or the swan stirs the reeds, his neck and bill
Wetting, that drip upon the water still;
And heron, as resounds the trodden shore,
Shoots upward, darting his long neck before.
While, by the scene compos'd, the breast subsides,
Nought wakens or disturbs it's tranquil tides;

AN EVENING WALK

Nought but the char that for the may-fly leaps,
 And breaks the mirror of the circling deeps;
 Or clock, that blind against the wanderer born,
 Drops at his feet, and stills his droning horn.
 —The whistling swain that plods his ringing way
 Where the slow waggon winds along the bay;
 The sugh¹ of swallow flocks that twittering sweep,
 The solemn curfew swinging long and deep;
 The talking boat that moves with pensive sound,
 Or drops his anchor down with plunge profound;
 Of boys that bathe remote the faint uproar,
 And restless piper wearying out the shore;
 These all to swell the village murmurs blend,
 That soften'd from the water-head descend.
 While in sweet cadence rising small and still
 The far-off minstrels of the haunted hill,
 As the last bleating of the fold expires,
 Tune in the mountain dells their water lyres.

Now with religious awe the farewell light
 Blends with the solemn colouring of the night;
 Mid groves of clouds that crest the mountain's brow,
 And round the West's proud lodge their shadows throw,
 Like Una shining on her gloomy way,²
 The half seen form of Twilight roams astray;
 Thence, from three paly loopholes mild and small,
 Slow lights upon the lake's still bosom fall,
 Beyond the mountain's giant reach that hides
 In deep determin'd gloom his subject tides.
 —Mid the dark steeps repose the shadowy streams,
 As touch'd with dawning moonlight's hoary gleams,
 Long streaks of fairy light the wave illumine
 With bordering lines of intervening gloom,
 Soft o'er the surface creep the lustres pale
 Tracking with silvering path the changeful gale.

¹ Sugh, a Scotch word, expressive, as Mr. Gilpin explains it, of the sound of the motion of a stick through the air, or of the wind passing through the trees. See Burns' *Cotter's Saturday Night*.

² Alluding to this passage of Spenser—

Her angel face
 As the great eye of Heaven shined bright,
 And made a sunshine in that shady place.

—'Tis restless magic all; at once the bright
 Breaks on the shade, the shade upon the light,
 Fair Spirits are abroad; in sportive chase
 Brushing with lucid wands the water's face,
 While music stealing round the glimmering deeps
 Charms the tall circle of th' enchanted steeps.
 —As thro' th' astonish'd woods the notes ascend,
 The mountain streams their rising song suspend;
 Below Eve's listening Star, the sheep walk stills
 It's drowsy tinklings on th' attentive hills;
 The milkmaid stops her ballad, and her pail
 Stays it's low murmur in th' unbreathing vale;
 No night-duck clamours for his wilder'd mate,
 Aw'd, while below the Genii hold their state.
 —The pomp is fled, and mute the wondrous strains,
 No wrack of all the pageant scene remains,
 So vanish those fair Shadows, human joys,¹
 But Death alone their vain regret destroys.
 Unheeded Night has overcome the vales,
 On the dark earth the baffl'd vision fails,
 If peep between the clouds a star on high,
 There turns for glad repose the weary eye;
 The latest lingerer of the forest train,
 The lone-black fir, forsakes the faded plain;
 Last evening sight, the cottage smoke no more,
 Lost in the deepen'd darkness, glimmers hoar;
 High towering from the sullen dark-brown mere,
 Like a black wall, the mountain steeps appear,
 Thence red from different heights with restless gleam
 Small cottage lights across the water stream,
 Nought else of man or life remains behind
 To call from other worlds the wilder'd mind,
 Till pours the wakeful bird her solemn strains
 Heard by the night-calm of the wat'ry plains.²
 —No purple prospects now the mind employ
 Glowing in golden sunset tints of joy,
 But o'er the sooth'd accordant heart we feel
 A sympathetic twilight slowly steal,

¹ So break those glittering shadows, human joys. YOUNG.

² "Charming the night-calm with her powerful song." A line of one of our older poets.

And ever, as we fondly muse, we find
 The soft gloom deep'ning on the tranquil mind.
 Stay! pensive, sadly-pleasing visions, stay!
 Ah no! as fades the vale, they fade away.
 Yet still the tender, vacant gloom remains,
 Still the cold cheek its shuddering tear retains.

The bird, with fading light who ceas'd to thread
 Silent the hedge or steaming rivulet's bed,
 From his grey re-appearing tower shall soon
 Salute with boding note the rising moon,
 Frosting with hoary light the pearly ground,
 And pouring deeper blue to Æther's bound;
 Rejoic'd her solemn pomp of clouds to fold
 In robes of azure, fleecy white, and gold,
 While rose and poppy, as the glow-worm fades,
 Checquer with paler red the thicket shades.

Now o'er the eastern hill, where Darkness broods
 O'er all its vanish'd dells, and lawns, and woods;
 Where but a mass of shade the sight can trace,
 She lifts in silence up her lovely face;
 Above the gloomy valley flings her light,
 Far to the western slopes with hamlets white;
 And gives, where woods the checquer'd upland strew,
 To the green corn of summer autumn's hue.

Thus Hope, first pouring from her blessed horn
 Her dawn, far lovelier than the Moon's own morn;
 'Till higher mounted, strives in vain to chear
 The weary hills, impervious, black'ning near;
 —Yet does she still, undaunted, throw the while
 On darling spots remote her tempting smile.
 —Ev'n now she decks for me a distant scene,
 (For dark and broad the gulph of time between)
 Gilding that cottage with her fondest ray,
 (Sole bourn, sole wish, sole object of my way;
 How fair it's lawn and silvery woods appear!
 How sweet it's streamlet murmurs in mine ear!)
 Where we, my friend, to golden days shall rise,
 'Till our small share of hardly-paining sighs
 (For sighs will ever trouble human breath)

Creep hush'd into the tranquil breast of Death.

But now the clear-bright Moon her zenith gains,
And rimy without speck extend the plains;
The deepest dell the mountain's breast displays,
Scarce hides a shadow from her searching rays;
From the dark-blue "faint silvery threads" divide
The hills, while gleams below the azure tide;
The scene is waken'd, yet its peace unbroke,
By silver'd wreaths of quiet charcoal smoke,
That, o'er the ruins of the fallen wood,
Steal down the hills, and spread along the flood.

The song of mountain streams unheard by day,
Now hardly heard, beguiles my homeward way.
All air is, as the sleeping water, still,
List'ning th' aëreal music of the hill,
Broke only by the slow clock tolling deep,
Or shout that wakes the ferry-man from sleep,
Soon follow'd by his hollow-parting oar,
And echo'd hoof approaching the far shore;
Sound of clos'd gate, across the water born,
Hurrying the feeding hare thro' rustling corn;
The tremulous sob of the complaining owl;
And at long intervals the mill-dog's howl;
The distant forge's swinging thump profound;
Or yell in the deep woods of lonely hound.

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DESCRIPTIVE SKETCHES

Descriptive Sketches. In Verse. Taken During a Pedestrian Tour In the Italian, Grison, Swiss and Savoyard Alps. By W. Wordsworth, B.A. Of St. John's, Cambridge. [Latin quotations.] London: Printed for J. Johnson, St. Paul's Churchyard. 1798.

The Fenwick Note dates "the greatest part" of the composition of the poem "during my walks upon the banks of the Loire in the years 1791, 1792."

Directly Coleridge read the poem, he saw in it the seeds of greatness:

During the last year of my residence at Cambridge, 1794, I became acquainted with Mr. Wordsworth's first publication entitled *Descriptive Sketches*; and seldom, if ever, was the emergence of an original poetic genius about the literary horizon more evidently announced. (*Biographia Literaria*, chap. iv.)

DESCRIPTIVE SKETCHES

To the Rev. Robert Jones,

FELLOW OF ST. JOHN'S COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE

DEAR SIR,

HOWEVER desirous I might have been of giving you proofs of the high place you hold in my esteem, I should have been cautious of wounding your delicacy by thus publicly addressing you, had not the circumstance of my having accompanied you amongst the Alps, seemed to give this dedication a propriety sufficient to do away any scruples which your modesty might otherwise have suggested.

In inscribing this little work to you I consult my heart. You know well how great is the difference between two companions lolling in a post chaise, and two travellers plodding slowly along the road, side by side, each with his little knapsack of necessaries upon his shoulders. How much more of heart between the two latter!

I am happy in being conscious I shall have one reader who will approach the conclusion of these few pages with regret. You they must certainly interest, in reminding you of moments to which you can hardly look back without a pleasure not the less dear from a shade of melancholy. You will meet with few images without recollecting the spot where we observed them together, consequently, whatever is feeble in my design, or spiritless in my colouring, will be amply supplied by your own memory.

With still greater propriety I might have inscribed to you a description of some of the features of your native mountains, through which we have wandered together, in the same manner, with so much pleasure. But the sea-sunsets which give such splendour to the vale of Clwyd, Snowdon, the chair of Idris, the quiet village of Bethkelert, Menai and her druids, the Alpine steeps of the Conway, and the still more interesting windings of the wizard stream of the Dee remain yet untouched. Apprehensive that my pencil may never be exercised on these subjects, I cannot

let slip this opportunity of thus publicly assuring you with how much affection and esteem, I am, Dear Sir, Your most obedient very humble Servant,

W. WORDSWORTH

ARGUMENT

Happiness (if she had been to be found on Earth) amongst the Charms of Nature—Pleasures of the pedestrian Traveller—Author crosses France to the Alps—Present state of the Grande Chartreuse—Lake of Como—Time, Sunset—Same Scene, Twilight—Same Scene, Morning, it's Voluptuous Character; Old Man and Forest Cottage Music—River Tusa—Via Mala and Grison Gypsey—Valley of Sckellenenthal—Lake of Uri—Stormy Sunset—Chapel of William Tell—Force of Local Emotion—Chamois Chaser—View of the higher Alps—Manner of Life of a Swiss Mountaineer interspersed with views of the higher Alps—Golden Age of the Alps—Life and Views continued—Ranz des Vaches, famous Swiss Air—Abbey of Einsiedlen and it's Pilgrims—Valley of Chamouny—Mont Blanc—Slavery of Savoy—Influence of Liberty on Cottage Happiness—France—Wish for the exterpation of Slavery—Conclusion.

WERE there, below, a spot of holy ground,
By Pain and her sad family unfound,
Sure, Nature's God that spot to man had giv'n,
Where murmuring rivers join the song of ev'n;
Where falls the purple morning far and wide
In flakes of light upon the mountain-side;
Where summer Suns in ocean sink to rest,
Or moonlight Upland lifts her hoary breast;
Where Silence, on her night of wing, o'erbroods
Unfathom'd dells and undiscover'd woods;
Where rocks and groves the power of waters shakes
In cataracts, or sleeps in quiet lakes.

But doubly pitying Nature loves to show'r
Soft on his wounded heart her healing pow'r,
Who plods o'er hills and vales his road forlorn,
Wooing her varying charms from eve to morn.
No sad vacuities his heart annoy,
Blows not a Zephyr but it whispers joy;
For him lost flowers their idle sweets exhale;
He tastes the meanest note that swells the gale;
For him sod-seats the cottage-door adorn,
And peeps the far-off spire, his evening bourn!

Dear is the forest frowning o'er his head,
 And dear the green-sward to his velvet tread;
 Moves there a cloud o'er mid-day's flaming eye?
 Upward he looks—and calls it luxury;
 Kind Nature's charities his steps attend,
 In every babbling brook he finds a friend,
 While chast'ning thoughts of sweetest use, bestow'd
 By Wisdom, moralize his pensive road.
 Host of his welcome inn, the noon-tide bow'r,
 To his spare meal he calls the passing poor;
 He views the Sun uprear his golden fire,
 Or sink, with heart alive like Memnon's lyre;¹
 Blesses the Moon that comes with kindest ray
 To light him shaken by his viewless way.
 With bashful fear no cottage children steal
 From him, a brother at the cottage meal,
 His humble looks no shy restraint impart,
 Around him plays at will the virgin heart.
 While unsuspended wheels the village dance,
 The maidens eye him with inquiring glance,
 Much wondering what sad stroke of crazing Care
 Or desperate Love could lead a wanderer there.

Me, lur'd by hope her sorrows to remove,
 A heart, that could not much itself approve,
 O'er Gallia's wastes of corn dejected led,
 Her road elms rustling thin above my head,²
 Or through her truant pathway's native charms,
 By secret villages and lonely farms,
 To where the Alps, ascending white in air,
 Toy with the Sun, and glitter from afar.

Ev'n now I sigh at hoary Chartreuse' doom
 Weeping beneath his chill of mountain gloom.
 Where now is fled that Power whose frown severe
 Tam'd "sober Reason" till she crouch'd in fear?
 That breath'd a death-like peace these woods around
 Broke only by th' unvaried torrent's sound,
 Or prayer-bell by the dull cicada drown'd.

¹ The lyre of Memnon is reported to have emitted melancholy or chearful tones, as it was touched by the sun's evening or morning rays.

² There are few people whom it may be necessary to inform, that the sides of many of the post-roads in France are planted with a row of trees.

The cloister startles at the gleam of arms,
 And Blasphemy the shuddering fane alarms;
 Nod the cloud-piercing pines their troubl'd heads,
 Spires, rocks, and lawns, a browner night o'erspreads.
 Strong terror checks the female peasant's sighs,
 And start th' astonish'd shades at female eyes.
 The thundering tube the aged angler hears,
 And swells the groaning torrent with his tears.
 From Bruno's forest screams the frightened jay,
 And slow th'insulted eagle wheels away.
 The cross with hideous laughter Demons mock,
 By angels planted on the aëreal rock.¹
 The "parting Genius" sighs with hollow breath
 Along the mystic streams of Life and Death,²
 Swelling the outcry dull, that long resounds
 Portentous, thro' her old woods' trackless bounds,
 Deepening her echoing torrents' awful peal
 And bidding paler shades her form conceal,
 Vallombre,³ mid her falling fanes, deplores,
 For ever broke, the sabbath of her bow'rs.

More pleas'd, my foot the hidden margin roves
 Of Como bosom'd deep in chesnut groves.
 No meadows thrown between, the giddy steeps
 Tower, bare or silvan, from the narrow deeps.
 To towns, whose shades of no rude sound complain,
 To ringing team unknown and grating wain,
 To flat-roof'd towns, that touch the water's bound,
 Or lurk in woody sunless glens profound,
 Or from the bending rocks obtrusive cling,
 And o'er the whiten'd wave their shadows fling;
 Wild round the steeps the little pathway twines,⁴
 And Silence loves it's purple roof of vines.
 The viewless lingerer hence, at evening, sees
 From rock-hewn steps the sail between the trees;
 Or marks, mid opening cliffs, fair dark-ey'd maids

¹ Alluding to crosses seen on the tops of the spiry rocks of the Chartreuse, which have every appearance of being inaccessible.

² Names of rivers at the Chartreuse.

³ Name of one of the vallies of the Chartreuse.

⁴ If any of my readers should ever visit the Lake of Como, I recommend it to him to take a stroll along this charming little pathway; he must chuse the evening, as it is on the western side of the Lake. We pursued it from the foot of the water to it's head: it is once interrupted by a ferry.

Tend the small harvest of their garden glades,
 Or, led by distant warbling notes, surveys,
 With hollow ringing ears and darkening gaze,
 Binding the charmed soul in powerless trance,
 Lip-dewing Song and ringlet-tossing Dance,
 Where sparkling eyes and breaking smiles illumine
 The bosom'd cabin's lyre-enliven'd gloom;
 Or stops the solemn mountain-shades to view
 Stretch, o'er their pictur'd mirror, broad and blue,
 Tracking the yellow sun from steep to steep,
 As up th' opposing hills, with tortoise foot, they creep.
 Here half a village shines, in gold array'd
 Bright as the moon, half hides itself in shade.
 From the dark sylvan roofs the restless spire,
 Inconstant glancing, mounts like springing fire.
 There, all unshaded, blazing forests throw
 Rich golden verdure on the waves below,
 Slow glides the sail along th' illumin'd shore,
 And steals into the shade the lazy oar.
 Soft bosoms breathe around contagious sighs,
 And amorous music on the water dies.
 Heedless how Pliny, musing here, survey'd
 Old Roman boats and figures thro' the shade,
 Pale Passion, overpower'd, retires and woos
 The thicket, where th' unlisten'd stock-dove coos.

How bless'd, delicious Scene! the eye that greets
 Thy open beauties, or thy lone retreats;
 Th' unwearied sweep of wood thy cliffs that scales,
 The never-ending waters of thy vales;
 The cots, those dim religious groves enbow'r,
 Or, under rocks that from the water tow'r
 Insinuated, sprinkling all the shore,
 Each with his household boat beside the door,
 Whose flaccid sails in forms fantastic droop,
 Bright'ning the gloom where thick the forests stoop;
 —Thy torrents shooting from the clear-blue sky,
 Thy towns, like swallows' nests that cleave on high;
 That glimmer hoar in eve's last light, descry'd
 Dim from the twilight water's shaggy side,
 Whence lutes and voices down th' enchanted woods
 Steal, and compose the oar-forgotten floods,

While Evening's solemn bird melodious weeps,
 Heard, by star-spotted bays, beneath the steeps;
 —Thy lake, mid smoking woods, that blue and grey
 Gleams, streak'd or dappled, hid from morning's ray
 Slow-travelling down the western hills, to fold
 It's green-ting'd margin in a blaze of gold;
 From thickly-glittering spires the matin-bell
 Calling the woodman from his desert cell,
 A summons to the sound of oars, that pass,
 Spotting the steaming deeps, to early mass;
 Slow swells the service o'er the water born,
 While fill each pause the ringing woods of morn.

Farewell! those forms that, in thy noon-tide shade,
 Rest, near their little plots of wheaten glade;
 Those stedfast eyes, that beating breasts inspire
 To throw the "sultry ray" of young Desire;
 Those lips, whose tides of fragrance come, and go,
 Accordant to the cheek's unquiet glow;
 Those shadowy breasts in love's soft light array'd,
 And rising, by the moon of passion sway'd.
 —Thy fragrant gales and lute-resounding streams,
 Breathe o'er the failing soul voluptuous dreams;
 While Slavery, forcing the sunk mind to dwell
 On joys that might disgrace the captive's cell,
 Her shameless timbrel shakes along thy marge,
 And winds between thine isles the vocal barge.

Yet, arts are thine that rock th' unsleeping heart,
 And smiles to Solitude and Want impart.
 I lov'd, mid thy most desert woods astray,
 With pensive step to measure my slow way,¹
 By lonely, silent cottage-doors to roam,
 The far-off peasant's day-deserted home;
 Once did I pierce to where a cabin stood,
 The red-breast peace had bury'd it in wood,
 There, by the door a hoary-headed sire
 Touch'd with his wither'd hand an aged lyre;
 Beneath an old-grey oak as violets lie,
 Stretch'd at his feet with stedfast, upward eye,

¹ "Solo, e pensoso i più deserti campi
 Vò misurando à passi tardi, e lenti."

His children's children join'd the holy sound,
A hermit—with his family around.

Hence shall we seek where fair Locarno smiles
Embower'd in walnut slopes and citron isles,
Or charms that smile on Tusa's evening stream,
While mid dim towers and woods her waters gleam;¹
From the bright wave, in solemn gloom, retire
The dull-red steeps, and darkening still, aspire,
To where afar rich orange lustres glow
Round undistinguish'd clouds, and rocks, and snow;
Or, led where Viamala's chasms confine
Th' indignant waters of the infant Rhine,
Bend o'er th' abyss?—the else impervious gloom
His burning eyes with fearful light illumine.
The Grison gypsy here her tent has plac'd,
Sole human tenant of the piny waste;
Her tawny skin, dark eyes, and glossy locks,
Bend o'er the smoke that curls beneath the rocks.

—The mind condemn'd, without reprieve, to go
O'er life's long deserts with it's charge of woe,
With sad congratulation joins the train,
Where beasts and men together o'er the plain
Move on,—a mighty caravan of pain;
Hope, strength, and courage, social suffering brings,
Freshening the waste of sand with shades and springs.
—She solitary through the desert drear
Spontaneous wanders, hand in hand with Fear.

A giant moan along the forest swells
Protracted, and the twilight storm foretells,
And, ruining from the cliffs their deafening load
Tumbles, the wildering Thunder slips abroad;
On the high summits Darkness comes and goes,
Hiding their fiery clouds, their rocks, and snows;
The torrent, travers'd by the lustre broad,
Starts like a horse beside the flashing road;
In the roof'd bridge,² at that despairing hour,

¹ The river along whose banks you descend in crossing the Alps by the Simplon pass. From the striking contrast of it's features, this pass I should imagine to be the most interesting among the Alps.

² Most of the bridges among the Alps are of wood and covered: these bridges have a heavy appearance, and rather injure the effect of the scenery in some places.

She seeks a shelter from the battering show'r.
 —Fierce comes the river down; the crashing wood
 Gives way, and half it's pines torment the flood;
 Fearful, beneath, the Water-spirits call,¹
 And the bridge vibrates, tottering to its fall.
 —Heavy, and dull, and cloudy is the night,
 No star supplies the comfort of it's light,
 Glimmer the dim-lit Alps, dilated, round,
 And one sole light shifts in the vale profound;
 While, opposite, the waning moon hangs still,
 And red, above her melancholy hill.
 By the deep quiet gloom appall'd, she sighs,
 Stoops her sick head, and shuts her weary eyes.
 —Breaking th' ascending roar of desert floods,
 And insect buzz, that stuns the sultry woods,
 She hears, upon the mountain forest's brow,
 The death-dog, howling loud and long, below;
 On viewless fingers counts the valley-clock,
 Followed by drowsy crow of midnight cock.
 —Bursts from the troubl'd Larch's giant boughs
 The pie, and chattering breaks the night's repose.
 Low barks the fox: by Havoc rous'd the bear
 Quits, growling, the white bones that strew his lair;
 The dry leaves stir as with the serpent's walk,
 And, far beneath, Banditti voices talk;
 Behind her hill the Moon, all crimson, rides,
 And his red eyes the slinking Water hides;
 Then all is hush'd; the bushes rustle near,
 And with strange tinglings sings her fainting ear.
 —Vex'd by the darkness, from the piny gulf
 Ascending, nearer howls the famish'd wolf,
 While thro' the stillness scatters wild dismay,
 Her babe's small cry, that leads him to his prey.

Now passing Urseren's open vale serene,
 Her quiet streams, and hills of downy green,
 Plunge with the Russ embrown'd by Terror's breath,
 Where danger roofs the narrow walks of death;
 By floods, that, thundering from their dizzy height,

¹ "Red came the river down, and loud, and oft
 The angry Spirit of the water shriek'd."

Swell more gigantic on the stedfast sight;
 Black drizzling craggs, that beaten by the din,
 Vibrate, as if a voice complain'd within;
 Bare steeps, where Desolation stalks, afraid,
 Unstedfast, by a blasted yew upstay'd;
 By cells¹ whose image, trembling as he prays,
 Awe struck, the kneeling peasant scarce surveys;
 Loose-hanging rocks the Day's bless'd eye that hide,
 And crosses rear'd to Death on every side,²
 Which with cold kiss Devotion planted near,
 And, bending, water'd with the human tear,
 Soon fading "silent" from her upward eye,
 Unmov'd with each rude form of Danger nigh,
 Fix'd on the anchor left by him who saves
 Alike in whelming snows and roaring waves.

On as we move, a softer prospect opes,
 Calm huts, and lawns between, and sylvan slopes.
 While mists, suspended on th' expiring gale,
 Moveless o'er-hang the deep secluded vale,
 The beams of evening, slipping soft between,
 Light up of tranquil joy a sober scene;
 Winding it's dark-green wood and emerald glade,
 The still vale lengthens underneath the shade;
 While in soft gloom the scattering bowers recede,
 Green dewy lights adorn the freshen'd mead,
 Where solitary forms illumin'd stray
 Turning with quiet touch the valley's hay,
 On the low brown wood-huts³ delighted sleep
 Along the brighten'd gloom reposing deep.
 While pastoral pipes and streams the landscape lull,
 And bells of passing mules that tinkle dull,
 In solemn shapes before th' admiring eye
 Dilated hang the misty pines on high,
 Huge convent domes with pinnacles and tow'rs,
 And antique castles seen thro' drizzling show'rs.

From such romantic dreams my soul awake,

¹ The Catholic religion prevails here. These cells are, as is well known, very common in the Catholic countries, planted, like Roman tombs, along the road side.

² Crosses commemorative of the deaths of travellers by the fall of snow and other accidents very common along this dreadful road.

³ The houses in the more retired Swiss valleys are all built of wood.

Lo! Fear looks silent down on Uri's lake,
 By whose unpathway'd margin still and dread
 Was never heard the plodding peasant's tread.
 Tower like a wall the naked rocks, or reach
 Far o'er the secret water dark with beech,
 More high, to where creation seems to end,
 Shade above shade the desert pines ascend,
 And still, below, where mid the savage scene
 Peeps out a little speck of smiling green,
 There with his infants man undaunted creeps
 And hangs his small wood-hut upon the steeps.
 A garden-plot the desert air perfumes,
 Mid the dark pines a little orchard blooms,
 A zig-zag path from the domestic skiff
 Threading the painful cragg surmounts the cliff.
 —Before those hermit doors, that never know
 The face of traveller passing to and fro,
 No peasant leans upon his pole, to tell
 For whom at morning toll'd the funeral bell,
 Their watch-dog ne'er his angry bark forgoes,
 Touch'd by the beggar's moan of human woes,
 The grassy seat beneath their casement shade
 The pilgrim's wistful eye hath never stay'd.
 —There, did the iron Genius not disdain
 The gentle Power that haunts the myrtle plain,
 There might the love-sick maiden sit, and chide
 Th' insuperable rocks and severing tide,
 There watch at eve her lover's sun-gilt sail
 Approaching, and upbraid the tardy gale,
 There list at midnight till is heard no more,
 Below, the echo of his parting oar,
 There hang in fear, when growls the frozen stream,
 To guide his dangerous tread the taper's gleam.

Mid stormy vapours ever driving by,
 Where ospreys, cormorants, and herons cry,
 Where hardly giv'n the hopeless waste to chear,
 Deny'd the bread of life the foodful ear,
 Dwindles the pear on autumn's latest spray,
 And apple sickens pale in summer's ray,
 Ev'n here Content has fix'd her smiling reign

With Independence child of high Disdain.
 Exulting mid the winter of the skies,
 Shy as the jealous chamois, Freedom flies,
 And often grasps her sword, and often eyes,
 Her crest a bough of Winter's bleakest pine,
 Strange "weeds" and alpine plants her helm entwine,
 And wildly-pausing oft she hangs aghast,
 While thrills the "Spartan fife" between the blast.

'Tis storm; and hid in mist from hour to hour
 All day the floods a deeper murmur pour,
 And mournful sounds, as of a Spirit lost,
 Pipe wild along the hollow-blustering coast,
 'Till the Sun walking on his western field
 Shakes from behind the clouds his flashing shield.
 Triumphant on the bosom of the storm,
 Glances the fire-clad eagle's wheeling form;
 Eastward, in long perspective glittering, shine
 The wood-crown'd cliffs that o'er the lake recline;
 Wide o'er the Alps a hundred streams unfold,
 At once to pillars turn'd that flame with gold;
 Behind his sail the peasant strives to shun
 The west that burns like one dilated sun,
 Where in a mighty crucible expire
 The mountains, glowing hot, like coals of fire.¹

But lo! the boatman, over-aw'd, before
 The pictur'd fane of Tell suspends his oar;
 Confused the Marathonian tale appears,
 While burn in his full eyes the glorious tears.
 And who but feels a power of strong controul,
 Felt only there, oppress his labouring soul,

¹ I had once given to these sketches the title of Picturesque; but the Alps are insulted in applying to them that term. Whoever, in attempting to describe their sublime features, should confine himself to the cold rules of painting would give his reader but a very imperfect idea of those emotions which they have the irresistible power of communicating to the most impassive imaginations. The fact is, that controuling influence, which distinguishes the Alps from all other scenery, is derived from images which disdain the pencil. Had I wished to make a picture of this scene I had thrown much less light into it. But I consulted nature and my feelings. The ideas excited by the stormy sunset I am here describing owed their sublimity to that deluge of light, or rather of fire, in which nature had wrapped the immense forms around me; any intrusion of shade, by destroying the unity of the impression, had necessarily diminished it's grandeur.

Who walks, where honour'd men of ancient days
Have wrought with god-like arm the deeds of praise?
Say, who, by thinking on Canadian hills,
Or wild Aosta lull'd by Alpine rills,
On Zutphen's plain; or where with soften'd gaze
The old grey stones the plaided chief surveys,
Can guess the high resolve, the cherish'd pain
Of him whom passion rivets to the plain,
Where breath'd the gale that caught Wolfe's happiest sigh,
And the last sun-beam fell on Bayard's eye,
Where bleeding Sydney from the cup retir'd,
And glad Dundee in "faint huzzas" expir'd.

But now with other soul I stand alone
Sublime upon this far-surveying cone,
And watch from pike to pike¹ amid the sky
Small as a bird the chamois-chaser fly.
'Tis his with fearless step at large to roam
Thro' wastes, of Spirits wing'd the solemn home,
Thro' vacant worlds where Nature never gave²
A brook to murmur or a bough to wave,
Which unsubstantial Phantoms sacred keep;
Thro' worlds where Life and Sound, and Motion sleep,
Where silence still her death-like reign extends,
Save when the startling cliff unfrequent rends:
In the deep snow the mighty ruin drown'd,
Mocks the dull ear of Time with deaf abortive sound;
—To mark a planet's pomp and steady light
In the least star of scarce-appearing night,
And neighbouring moon, that coasts the vast profound,
Wheel pale and silent her diminish'd round,
While far and wide the icy summits blaze
Rejoicing in the glory of her rays;
The star of noon that glitters small and bright,
Shorn of his beams, insufferably white,
And flying fleet behind his orb to view
Th' interminable sea of sable blue.
—Of cloudless suns no more ye frost-built spires

¹ Pike is a word very commonly used in the north of England, to signify a high mountain of the conic form, as Langdale pike, &c.

² For most of the images in the next sixteen verses I am indebted to M. Raymond's interesting observations annexed to his translation of Coxe's Tour in Switzerland.

Refract in rainbow hues the restless fires!
 Ye dewy mists the arid rocks o'er-spread
 Whose slippery face derides his deathful tread!
 —To wet the peak's impracticable sides
 He opens of his feet the sanguine tides,
 Weak and more weak the issuing current eyes
 Lapp'd by the panting tongue of thirsty skies.¹
 —At once bewildering mists around him close,
 And cold and hunger are his least of woes;
 The Demon of the snow with angry roar
 Descending, shuts for aye his prison door.
 Craz'd by the strength of hope at morn he eyes
 As sent from heav'n the raven of the skies,
 Then with despair's whole weight his spirits sink,
 No bread to feed him, and the snow his drink,
 While ere his eyes can close upon the day,
 The eagle of the Alps o'ershades his prey.
 —Meanwhile his wife and child with cruel hope
 All night the door at every moment ope;
 Haply that child in fearful doubt may gaze,
 Passing his father's bones in future days,
 Start at the reliques of that very thigh,
 On which so oft he prattled when a boy.

Hence shall we turn where, heard with fear afar,
 Thunders thro' echoing pines the headlong Aar?
 Or rather stay to taste the mild delights
 Of pensive Underwalden's pastoral heights?²
 —Is there who mid these awful wilds has seen
 The native Genii walk the mountain green?
 Or heard, while other worlds their charms reveal,
 Soft music from th' aëreal summit steal?
 While o'er the desert, answering every close,
 Rich steam of sweetest perfume comes and goes.
 —And sure there is a secret Power that reigns
 Here, where no trace of man the spot profanes,

¹ The rays of the sun drying the rocks frequently produce on their surface a dust so subtile and slippery, that the wretched chamois-chasers are obliged to bleed themselves in the legs and feet in order to secure a footing.

² The people of this Canton are supposed to be of a more melancholy disposition than the other inhabitants of the Alps: this, if true, may proceed from their living more secluded.

Nought but the herds that pasturing upward creep,
 Hung dim-discover'd from the dangerous steep,
 Or summer hamlet,¹ flat and bare, on high
 Suspended, mid the quiet of the sky.
 How still! no irreligious sound or sight
 Rouzes the soul from her severe delight.
 An idle voice the sabbath region fills
 Of Deep that calls to Deep across the hills,
 Broke only by the melancholy sound
 Of drowsy bells for ever tinkling round;
 Faint wail of eagle melting into blue
 Beneath the cliffs, and pine-woods steady sigh;²
 The solitary heifer's deepen'd low;
 Or rumbling heard remote of falling snow.
 Save that, the stranger seen below, the boy
 Shouts from the echoing hills with savage joy.

When warm from myrtle bays and tranquil seas,
 Comes on, to whisper hope, the vernal breeze,³
 When hums the mountain bee in May's glad ear,
 And emerald isles to spot the heights appear,
 When shouts and lowing herds the valley fill,
 And louder torrents stun the noon-tide hill,
 When fragrant scents beneath th' enchanted tread
 Spring up, his little all around him spread,
 The pastoral Swiss begins the cliffs to scale,
 To silence leaving the deserted vale,
 Up the green mountain tracking Summer's feet,
 Each twilight earlier call'd the Sun to meet,
 With earlier smile the ray of morn to view
 Fall on his shifting hut that gleams mid smoking dew;
 Bless'd with his herds, as in the patriarch's age,
 The summer long to feed from stage to stage;
 O'er azure pikes serene and still, they go,
 And hear the rattling thunder far below;
 Or lost at eve in sudden mist the day

¹ These summer hamlets are most probably (as I have seen observed by a critic in the *Gentleman's Magazine*) what Virgil alludes to in the expression "Castella in tumultis."

² Sigh, a Scotch word expressive of the sound of the wind through the trees.

³ This wind, which announces the spring to the Swiss, is called in their language FOEN; and is according to M. Raymond the Syroco of the Italians.

Attend, or dare with minute-steps their way;
 Hang from the rocks that tremble o'er the steep,
 And tempt the icy valley yawning deep,
 O'er walk the chasmy torrent's foam-lit bed,
 Rock'd on the dizzy larch's narrow tread,
 Whence Danger leans, and pointing ghastly, joys
 To mock the mind with "desperation's toys";
 Or steal beneath loose mountains, half-deterr'd,
 That sigh and shudder to the lowing herd.
 —I see him, up the midway cliff he creeps
 To where a scanty knot of verdure peeps,
 Thence down the steep a pile of grass he throws
 The fodder of his herds in winter snows.
 Far different life to what tradition hoar
 Transmits of days more bless'd in times of yore.¹
 Then Summer lengthen'd out his season bland,
 And with rock-honey flow'd the happy land.
 Continual fountains welling cheer'd the waste,
 And plants were wholesome, now of deadly taste.
 Nor Winter yet his frozen stores had pil'd
 Usurping where the fairest herbage smil'd;
 Nor Hunger forc'd the herds from pastures bare
 For scanty food the treacherous cliffs to dare.
 Then the milk-thistle bad those herds demand
 Three times a day the pail and welcome hand.
 But human vices have provok'd the rod
 Of angry Nature to avenge her God.
 Thus does the father to his sons relate,
 On the lone mountain top, their chang'd estate.
 Still, Nature, ever just, to him imparts
 Joys only given to uncorrupted hearts.
 —'Tis morn: with gold the verdant mountain glows,
 More high, the snowy peaks with hues of rose.
 Far stretch'd beneath the many-tinted hills,
 A mighty waste of mist the valley fills,

¹ This tradition of the golden age of the Alps, as M. Raymond observes, is highly interesting, interesting not less to the philosopher than to the poet. Here I cannot help remarking, that the superstitions of the Alps appear to be far from possessing that poetical character which so eminently distinguishes those of Scotland and the other mountainous northern countries. The Devil with his horns, &c., seems to be, in their idea, the principal agent that brings about the sublime natural revolutions that take place daily before their eyes.

A solemn sea! whose vales and mountains round
Stand motionless, to awful silence bound.
A gulf of gloomy blue, that opens wide
And bottomless, divides the midway tide.
Like leaning masts of stranded ships appear
The pines that near the coast their summits rear;
Of cabins, woods, and lawns a pleasant shore
Bounds calm and clear the chaos still and hoar;
Loud thro' that midway gulf ascending, sound
Unnumber'd streams with hollow roar profound.
Mounts thro' the nearer mist the chaunt of birds,
And talking voices, and the low of herds,
The bark of dogs, the drowsy tinkling bell,
And wild-wood mountain lutes of saddest swell.
Think not, suspended from the cliff on high
He looks below with undelighted eye.

—No vulgar joy is his, at even tide
Stretch'd on the scented mountain's purple side.
For as the pleasures of his simple day
Beyond his native valley hardly stray,
Nought round it's darling precincts can he find
But brings some past enjoyment to his mind,
While Hope that ceaseless leans on Pleasure's urn
Binds her wild wreathes, and whispers his return.

Once Man entirely free, alone and wild,
Was bless'd as free—for he was Nature's child.
He, all superior but his God disdain'd,
Walk'd none restraining, and by none restrain'd,
Confess'd no law but what his reason taught,
Did all he wish'd, and wish'd but what he ought.
As Man in his primæval dower array'd
The image of his glorious sire display'd,
Ev'n so, by vestal Nature guarded, here
The traces of primæval Man appear.
The native dignity no forms debase,
The eye sublime, and surly lion-grace.
The slave of none, of beasts alone the lord,
He marches with his flute, his book, and sword,
Well taught by that to feel his rights, prepar'd
With this "the blessings he enjoys to guard."

And as on glorious ground he draws his breath,

Where Freedom oft, with Victory and Death,
Hath seen in grim array amid their Storms
Mix'd with auxiliar Rocks, three hundred Forms;¹
While twice ten thousand corselets at the view
Dropp'd loud at once, Oppression shriek'd and flew.
Oft as those sainted Rocks before him spread,
An unknown power connects him with the dead.
For images of other worlds are there,
Awful the light, and holy is the air.
Uncertain thro' his fierce uncultur'd soul
Like lighted tempests troubled transports roll;
To viewless realms his Spirit towers amain,
Beyond the senses and their little reign.

And oft, when pass'd that solemn vision by,
He holds with God himself communion high,
When the dread peal of swelling torrents fills
The sky-roof'd temple of th' eternal hills,
And savage Nature humbly joins the rite,
While flash her upward eyes severe delight.
Or gazing from the mountain's silent brow
Bright stars of ice and azure worlds of snow,
Where needle peaks of granite shooting bare
Tremble in ever-varying tints of air,
Great joy by horror tam'd dilates his heart,
And the near heav'ns their own delights impart.
—When the Sun bids the gorgeous scene farewell,
Alps overlooking Alps their state upswell;
Huge Pikes of Darkness named, of Fear and Storms,²
Lift, all serene, their still, illumin'd forms,
In sea-like reach of prospect round him spread,
Ting'd like an angel's smile all rosy red.

When downward to his winter hut he goes,
Dear and more dear the lessening circle grows,

¹ Alluding to several battles which the Swiss in very small numbers have gained over their oppressors, the house of Austria; and in particular, to one fought at Naeffels near Glarus, where three hundred and thirty men defeated an army of between fifteen and twenty thousand Austrians. Scattered over the valley are to be found eleven stones, with this inscription 1388, the year the battle was fought, marking out as I was told upon the spot, the several places where the Austrians attempting to make a stand were repulsed anew.

² As Schreck-Horn, the pike of terror. Wetter-Horn the pike of storms, &c., &c.

That hut which from the hills his eyes employs
 So oft, the central point of all his joys.
 And as a swift by tender cares oppress'd
 Peeps often ere she dart into her nest,
 So to th' untrodden floor, where round him looks
 His father helpless as the babe he rocks,
 Oft he descends to nurse the brother pair,
 Till storm and driving ice blockade him there;
 There hears, protected by the woods behind,
 Secure, the chiding of the baffled wind,
 Hears Winter, calling all his Terrors round,
 Rush down the living rocks with whirlwind sound.
 Thro' Nature's vale his homely pleasures glide
 Unstain'd by envy, discontent, and pride,
 The bound of all his vanity to deck
 With one bright bell a favourite heifer's neck;
 Content upon some simple annual feast,
 Remember'd half the year, and hop'd the rest,
 If dairy produce, from his inner hoard,
 Of thrice ten summers consecrate the board.
 —Alas! in every clime a flying ray
 Is all we have to chear our wintry way,
 Condemn'd, in mists and tempests ever rife,
 To pant slow up the endless Alp of life.
 "Here," cried a swain, whose venerable head
 Bloom'd with the snow-drops of Man's narrow bed,
 Last night, while by his dying fire, as clos'd
 The day, in luxury my limbs repos'd,
 "Here Penury oft from misery's mount will guide
 Ev'n to the summer door his icy tide,
 And here the avalanche of Death destroy
 The little cottage of domestic Joy.
 But, ah! th' unwilling mind may more than trace
 The general sorrows of the human race:
 The churlish gales, that unremitting blow
 Cold from necessity's continual snow,
 To us the gentle groups of bliss deny
 That on the noon-day bank of leisure lie.
 Yet more; the tyrant Genius, still at strife
 With all the tender Charities of life,
 When close and closer they begin to strain,

No fond hand left to staunch th' unclosing vein,
Tearing their bleeding ties leaves Age to groan
On his wet bed, abandon'd and alone.
For ever, fast as they of strength become
To pay the filial debt, for food to roam,
The father, forc'd by Powers that only deign
That solitary Man disturb their reign,
From his bare nest amid the storms of heaven
Drives, eagle-like, his sons as he was driven,
His last dread pleasure! watches to the plain—
And never, eagle-like, beholds again."

When the poor heart has all its joys resign'd,
Why does their sad remembrance cleave behind?
Lo! by the lazy Seine the exile roves,
Or where thick sails illumine Batavia's groves;
Soft o'er the waters mournful measures swell,
Unlocking bleeding Thought's "memorial cell";
At once upon his heart Despair has set
Her seal, the mortal tear his cheek has wet;
Strong poison not a form of steel can brave
Bows his young hairs with sorrow to the grave.¹

Gay lark of hope thy silent song resume!
Fair smiling lights the purpled hills illumine!
Soft gales and dews of life's delicious morn,
And thou, lost fragrance of the heart return!
Soon flies the little joy to man allow'd,²
And tears before him travel like a cloud.
For come Diseases on, and Penury's rage,
Labour, and Pain, and Grief, and joyless Age,
And Conscience dogging close his bleeding way
Cries out, and leads her Spectres to their prey,
'Till Hope-deserted, long in vain his breath
Implores the dreadful untried sleep of Death.
—Mid savage rocks and seas of snow that shine
Between interminable tracts of pine,
Round a lone fane the human Genii mourn,
Where fierce the rays of woe collected burn.

¹ The effect of the famous air, called in French *Ranz des Vaches*, upon the Swiss troops removed from their native country is well known, as also the injunction of not playing it on pain of death, before the regiments of that nation, in the service of France and Holland.

² *Optima quaeque dies, &c.* [Virgil: *Georgics*, iii, 66-8].

—From viewless lamps a ghastly dimness falls,
And ebbs uncertain on the troubled walls,
Dim dreadful faces thro' the gloom appear,
Abortive Joy, and Hope that works in fear,
While strives a secret Power to hush the croud,
Pain's wild rebellious burst proclaims her rights aloud.

Oh give not me that eye of hard disdain
That views undimm'd Einsiedlen's wretched fane.¹
Mid muttering prayers all sounds of torment meet,
Dire clap of hands, distracted chase of feet,
While loud and dull ascends the weeping cry,
Surely in other thoughts contempt may die.
If the sad grave of human ignorance bear
One flower of hope—Oh pass and leave it there.

—The tall Sun, tiptoe on an Alpine spire,
Flings o'er the desert blood-red streams of fire.
At such an hour there are who love to stray,
And meet the gladdening pilgrims on their way.
—Now with joy's tearful kiss each other greet,
Nor longer naked be your way-worn feet,
For ye have reach'd at last the happy shore,
Where the charm'd worm of pain shall gnaw no more.
How gayly murmur and how sweetly taste
The fountains rear'd for you amid the waste!²
Yes I will see you when ye first behold
Those turrets tipp'd by hope with morning gold,
And watch, while on your brows the cross ye make,
Round your pale eyes a wintry lustre wake.
—Without one hope her written griefs to blot,
Save in the land where all things are forgot,
My heart, alive to transports long unknown,
Half wishes your delusion were it's own.

Last let us turn to where Chamouny³ shields,
Bosom'd in gloomy woods, her golden fields,

¹ This shrine is resorted to, from a hope of relief, by multitudes, from every corner of the Catholick world, labouring under mental or bodily afflictions.

² Rude fountains built and covered with sheds for the accommodation of the pilgrims, in their ascent of the mountain. Under these sheds the sentimental traveller and the philosopher may find interesting sources of meditation.

³ This word is pronounced upon the spot Chàmouny, I have taken the liberty of reading it long, thinking it more musical.

Five streams of ice amid her cots descend,
 And with wild flowers and blooming orchards blend,
 A scene more fair than what the Grecian feigns
 Of purple lights and ever vernal plains.
 Here lawns and shades by breezy rivulets fann'd,
 Here all the Seasons revel hand in hand.
 —Red stream the cottage lights; the landscape fades,
 Erroneous wavering mid the twilight shades.
 Alone ascends that mountain nam'd of white,¹
 That dallies with the Sun the summer night.
 Six thousand years amid his lonely bounds
 The voice of Ruin, day and night, resounds.
 Where Horror-led his sea of ice assails,
 Havoc and Chaos blast a thousand vales,
 In waves, like two enormous serpents, wind
 And drag their length of deluge train behind.
 Between the pine's enormous boughs descry'd
 Serene he towers, in deepest purple dy'd;
 Glad Day-light laughs upon his top of snow,
 Glitter the stars above, and all is black below.

At such an hour I heav'd the human sigh,
 When roar'd the sullen Arve in anger by,
 That not for thee, delicious vale! unfold
 Thy reddening orchards, and thy fields of gold;
 That thou, the slave of slaves,² art doom'd to pine,
 While no Italian arts their charms combine
 To teach the skirt of thy dark cloud to shine;
 For thy poor babes that, hurrying from the door,
 With pale-blue hands, and eyes that fix'd implore,
 Dead muttering lips, and hair of hungry white,
 Besiege the traveller whom they half affright.
 —Yes, were it mine, the cottage meal to share
 Forc'd from my native mountains bleak and bare;
 O'er Anet's³ hopeless seas of marsh to stray,
 Her shrill winds roaring round my lonely way;
 To scent the sweets of Piedmont's breathing rose,
 And orange gale that o'er Lugano blows;

¹ It is only from the higher part of the valley of Chamouny that Mont Blanc is visible.

² It is scarce necessary to observe that these lines were written before the emancipation of Savoy.

³ A vast extent of marsh so called near the lake of Neufchatel.

In the wide range of many a weary round,
 Still have my pilgrim feet unfailing found,
 As despot courts their blaze of gems display,
 Ev'n by the secret cottage far away
 The lily of domestic joy decay;
 While Freedom's farthest hamlets blessings share,
 Found still beneath her smile, and only there.
 The casement shade more luscious woodbine binds,
 And to the door a neater pathway winds,
 At early morn the careful housewife, led
 To cull her dinner from it's garden bed,
 Of weedless herbs a healthier prospect sees,
 While hum with busier joy her happy bees;
 In brighter rows her table wealth aspires,
 And laugh with merrier blaze her evening fires;
 Her infant's cheeks with fresher roses glow,
 And wilder graces sport around their brow;
 By clearer taper lit a cleanlier board
 Receives at supper hour her tempting hoard;
 The chamber hearth with fresher boughs is spread,
 And whiter is the hospitable bed.
 —And thou! fair favoured region! which my soul
 Shall love, 'till Life has broke her golden bowl,
 Till Death's cold touch her cistern-wheel assail,
 And vain regret and vain desire shall fail;
 Tho' now, where erst the grey-clad peasant stray'd,
 To break the quiet of the village shade
 Gleam war's discordant habits thro' the trees¹
 And the red banner mock the sullen breeze;
 'Tho' now no more thy maids their voices suit
 To the low-warbled breath of twilight lute,
 And heard, the pausing village hum between,
 No solemn songstress lull the fading green,
 Scared by the fife, and rumbling drum's alarms,
 And the short thunder, and the flash of arms;
 While, as Night bids the startling uproar die,
 Sole sound, the sourd² renews his mournful cry:

¹ This, as may be supposed, was written before France became the seat of war.

² An insect so called, which emits a short, melancholy cry, heard, at the close of the summer evenings, on the banks of the Loire.

—Yet, hast thou found that Freedom spreads her pow'r
 Beyond the cottage hearth, the cottage door:
 All nature smiles; and owns beneath her eyes
 Her fields peculiar, and peculiar skies.
 Yes, as I roam'd where Loiret's¹ waters glide
 Thro' rustling aspens heard from side to side,
 When from october clouds a milder light
 Fell, where the blue flood rippled into white,
 Methought from every cot the watchful bird
 Crowed with ear-piercing power 'till then unheard;
 Each clacking mill, that broke the murmuring streams,
 Rock'd the charm'd thought in more delightful dreams;
 Chasing those long long dreams the falling leaf
 Awoke a fainter pang of moral grief;
 The measured echo of the distant flail
 Winded in sweeter cadence down the vale;
 A more majestic tide the water roll'd,²
 And glowed the sun-gilt groves in richer gold:
 —Tho' Liberty shall soon, indignant, raise
 Red on his hills his beacon's comet blaze;
 Bid from on high his lonely cannon sound,
 And on ten thousand hearths his shout rebound;

¹ The river Loiret, which has the honour of giving name to a department, rises out of the earth at a place, called La Source, a league and a half south-east of Orleans, and taking at once the character of a considerable stream, winds under a most delicious bank on its left, with a flat country of meadows, woods, and vineyards on its right, till it falls into the Loire about three or four leagues below Orleans. The hand of false taste has committed on its banks those outrages which the Abbé de Lille so pathetically deprecates in those charming verses descriptive of the Seine, visiting in secret the retreat of his friend Watelet. Much as the Loiret, in its short course, suffers from injudicious ornament, yet are there spots to be found upon its banks as soothing as meditation could wish for: the curious traveller may meet with some of them where it loses itself among the mills in the neighbourhood of the villa called La Fontaine. The walks of La Source, where it takes its rise, may, in the eyes of some people, derive an additional interest from the recollection that they were the retreat of Bolingbroke during his exile, and that here it was that his philosophical works were chiefly composed. The inscriptions of which he speaks in one of his letters to Swift descriptive of this spot, are not, I believe, now extant. The gardens have been modelled within these twenty years according to a plan evidently not dictated by the taste of the friend of Pope.

² The duties upon many of the French rivers were so exorbitant that the poorer people, deprived of the benefit of water carriage, were obliged to transport their goods by land.

His larum-bell from village-tow'r to tow'r
 Swing on th' astounded ear it's dull undying roar:
 Yet, yet rejoice, tho' Pride's perverted ire
 Rouze Hell's own aid, and wrap thy hills in fire.
 Lo! from th' innocuous flames, a lovely birth!
 With it's own Virtues springs another earth:
 Nature, as in her prime, her virgin reign
 Begins, and Love and Truth compose her train;
 With pulseless hand, and fix'd unwearied gaze,
 Unbreathing Justice her still beam surveys:
 No more, along thy vales and viny groves,
 Whole hamlets disappearing as he moves,
 With cheeks o'erspread by smiles of baleful glow,
 On his pale horse shall fell Consumption go.

Oh give, great God, to Freedom's waves to ride
 Sublime o'er Conquest, Avarice, and Pride,
 To break, the vales where Death with Famine scow'rs,
 And dark Oppression builds her thick-ribb'd tow'rs;
 Where Machination her fell soul resigns,
 Fled panting to the centre of her mines;
 Where Persecution decks with ghastly smiles
 Her bed, his mountains mad Ambition piles;
 Where Discord stalks dilating, every hour,
 And crouching fearful at the feet of Pow'r,
 Like Lightnings eager for th' almighty word,
 Look up for sign of havoc, Fire and Sword,¹
 —Give them, beneath their breast while Gladness springs,
 To brood the nations o'er with Nile-like wings;
 And grant that every sceptred child of clay—
 Who cries, presumptuous, "here their tides shall stay,"
 Swept in their anger from th' affrighted shore,
 With all his creatures sink—to rise no more.

To-night, my friend, within this humble cot
 Be the dead load of mortal ills forgot,
 Renewing, when the rosy summits glow
 At morn, our various journey, sad and slow.

¹ —And, at his heels,
 Leash'd in like hounds, should Famine, Sword, and Fire,
 Crouch for employment. [Shakespeare: *Henry V*, Act I.]

A LETTER TO THE BISHOP OF LLANDAFF

A Letter to the Bishop of Llandaff was first printed in *The Prose Works of William Wordsworth*, Edited by the Rev. Alexander B. Grosart (1876), I, 1-23. Owing to the kindness of Mr. A. W. Stockwell of Canterbury College, Christ Church, N.Z., who has allowed access to his unpublished thesis "Wordsworth's Politics" in the Bodleian Library, it is possible to give the following account of the manuscript.

Accompanying the manuscript in the Wordsworth Museum, Grasmere, is a slip of paper bearing the following words in the handwriting of the late Mr. Gordon Wordsworth: "I cannot accept Dr. Grosart's statement (*Prose Works*, i, xiii) that this manuscript is in the handwriting of William Wordsworth—G.G.W. I can find no date upon the watermark. 1793." Parts of the manuscript, however, do seem to be clearly in Wordsworth's hand. "The manuscript is certainly a fair copy," writes Mr. Stockwell, "and looks as if it was written out mainly by the unidentified scribe, with Wordsworth taking over the pen at irregular intervals. Crossings-out show that, as they went, they made slight improvements on the previous draft, and when they had finished Wordsworth seems to have gone through the whole thing again, making additions and revisions." On this and other internal evidence, Mr. Stockwell concludes that the work is authentic, and is to be dated about the middle of 1793.

The following text is basically that of Grosart, but incorporates eighteen corrections, some of them of major importance, noted by Mr. Stockwell. Grosart's self-invented title has been abandoned, and that of the manuscript restored.

A LETTER TO THE BISHOP OF LLANDAFF

ON THE EXTRAORDINARY AVOWAL OF HIS POLITICAL PRINCIPLES,
CONTAINED IN THE APPENDIX TO HIS LATE SERMON

BY A REPUBLICAN

My Lord,

REPUTATION may not improperly be termed the moral life of man. Alluding to our natural existence, Addison, in a sublime allegory well known to your Lordship, has represented us as crossing an immense bridge, from whose surface from a variety of causes we disappear one after another, and are seen no more. Every one who enters upon public life has such a bridge to pass. Some slip through at the very commencement of their career from thoughtlessness, others pursue their course a little longer, till, misled by the phantoms of avarice and ambition, they fall victims to their delusion. Your Lordship was either seen, or supposed to be seen, continuing your way for a long time un-seduced and undismayed; but those who now look for you will look in vain, and it is feared you have at last fallen, through one of the numerous trap-doors, into the tide of contempt, to be swept down to the ocean of oblivion.

It is not my intention to be illiberal; these latter expressions have been forced from me by indignation. Your Lordship has given a proof that even religious controversy may be conducted without asperity; I hope I shall profit by your example. At the same time, with a spirit which you may not approve—for it is a republican spirit—I shall not preclude myself from any truths, however severe, which I may think beneficial to the cause which I have undertaken to defend. You will not, then, be surprised when I inform you that it is only the name of its author which has induced me to notice an Appendix to a Sermon which you have lately given to the world, with a hope that it may have some effect in calming a perturbation which, you say, has been *excited* in the minds of the lower orders of the community. While, with a servility which has prejudiced many people against religion itself, the ministers of the Church of England have appeared as writers upon public measures only to be the advocates of slavery civil and

religious, your Lordship stood almost alone as the defender of truth and political charity. The names of levelling prelate, bishop of the Dissenters, which were intended as a dishonour to your character, were looked upon by your friends—perhaps by yourself—as an acknowledgment of your possessing an enlarged and philosophical mind; and, like the generals in a neighbouring country, if it had been equally becoming your profession, you might have adopted, as an honourable title, a denomination intended as a stigma.

On opening your Appendix, your admirers will naturally expect to find an impartial statement of the grievances which harass this Nation, and a sagacious inquiry into the proper modes of redress. They will be disappointed. Sensible how large a portion of mankind receive opinions upon authority, I am apprehensive lest the doctrines which they will there find should derive a weight from your name to which they are by no means intrinsically entitled. I will therefore examine what you have advanced, from a hope of being able to do away any impression left on the minds of such as may be liable to confound with argument a strong prepossession for your Lordship's talents, experience, and virtues.

Before I take notice of what you appear to have laid down as principles, it may not be improper to advert to some incidental opinions found at the commencement of your political confession of faith.

At a period big with the fate of the human race I am sorry that you attach so much importance to the personal sufferings of the late royal martyr, and that an anxiety for the issue of the present convulsions should not have prevented you from joining in the idle cry of modish lamentation which has resounded from the Court to the cottage. You wish it to be supposed you are one of those who are unpersuaded of the guilt of Louis XVI. If you had attended to the history of the French Revolution as minutely as its importance demands, so far from stopping to bewail his death, you would rather have regretted that the blind fondness of his people had placed a human being in that monstrous situation which rendered him unaccountable before a human tribunal. A bishop, a man of philosophy and humanity as distinguished as your Lordship, declared at the opening of the National Convention—and twenty-five millions of men were convinced of the truth of the assertion—that there was not a citizen on the tenth of August who, if he could have dragged before the eyes of Louis the corse of one of his murdered brothers, might not have exclaimed to him: "Tyran,

voilà ton ouvrage." Think of this, and you will not want consolation under any depression your spirits may feel at the contrast exhibited by Louis on the most splendid throne of the universe, and Louis alone in the tower of the Temple or on the scaffold. But there is a class of men who received the news of the late execution with much more heartfelt sorrow than that which you, among such a multitude, so officiously express. The passion of pity is one of which, above all others, a Christian teacher should be cautious of cherishing the abuse when, under the influence of reason, it is regulated by the disproportion of the pain suffered to the guilt incurred. It is from the passion thus directed that the men of whom I have just spoken are afflicted by the catastrophe of the fallen monarch. They are sorry that the prejudice and weakness of mankind have made it necessary to force an individual into an unnatural situation, which requires more than human talents and human virtues, and at the same time precludes him from attaining even a moderate knowledge of common life, and from feeling a particular share in the interests of mankind. But, above all, these men lament that any combination of circumstances should have rendered it necessary or advisable to veil for a moment the statutes of the laws, and that by such emergency the cause of twenty-five millions of people, I may say of the whole human race, should have been so materially injured. Any other sorrow for the death of Louis is irrational and weak.

In France royalty is no more. The person of the last anointed is no more also; and I flatter myself I am not alone, even in this *kingdom*, when I wish that it may please the Almighty neither by the hands of His priests nor His nobles (I allude to a striking passage of Racine) to raise his posterity to the rank of his ancestors, and reillumine the torch of extinguished David.

You say: "I fly with terror and abhorrence even from the altar of Liberty, when I see it stained with the blood of the aged, of the innocent, of the defenceless sex, of the ministers of religion, and of the faithful adherents of a fallen monarch." What! have you so little knowledge of the nature of man as to be ignorant that a time of revolution is not the season of true Liberty? Alas, the obstinacy and perversion of men is such that she is too often obliged to borrow the very arms of Despotism to overthrow him, and, in order to reign in peace, must establish herself by violence. She deplores such stern necessity, but the safety of the people, her supreme law, is her consolation. This apparent contradiction

between the principles of liberty and the march of revolutions; this spirit of jealousy, of severity, of disquietude, of vexation, indispensable from a state of war between the oppressors and oppressed, must of necessity confuse the ideas of morality, and contract the benign exertion of the best affections of the human heart. Political virtues are developed at the expense of moral ones; and the sweet emotions of compassion, evidently dangerous when traitors are to be punished, are too often altogether smothered. But is this a sufficient reason to reprobate a convulsion from which is to spring a fairer order of things? It is the province of education to rectify the erroneous notions which a habit of oppression, and even of resistance, may have created, and to soften this ferocity of character, proceeding from a necessary suspension of the mild and social virtues; it belongs to her to create a race of men who, truly free, will look upon their fathers as only enfranchised.

I proceed to the sorrow you express for the fate of the French priesthood. The measure by which that body was immediately stripped of part of its possessions, and a more equal distribution enjoined of the rest, does not meet with your Lordship's approbation. You do not question the right of the Nation over ecclesiastical wealth; you have voluntarily abandoned a ground which you were conscious was altogether untenable. Having allowed this right, can you question the propriety of exerting it at that particular period? The urgencies of the State were such as required the immediate application of a remedy. Even the clergy were conscious of such necessity; and aware, from the immunities they had long enjoyed, that the people would insist upon their bearing some share of the burden, offered of themselves a considerable portion of their superfluities. The Assembly was true to justice, and refused to compromise the interests of the Nation by accepting as a satisfaction the insidious offerings of compulsive charity. They enforced their right. They took from the clergy a large share of their wealth, and applied it to the alleviation of the national misery. Experience shows daily the wise employment of the ample provision which yet remains to them. While you reflect on the vast diminution which some men's fortunes must have undergone, your sorrow for these individuals will be diminished by recollecting the unworthy motives which induced the bulk of them to undertake the office, and the scandalous arts which enabled so many to attain the rank and enormous wealth which it has seemed necessary to annex to the charge of a Christian pastor. You will rather look

upon it as a signal act of justice that they should thus unexpectedly be stripped of the rewards of their vices and their crimes. If you should lament the sad reverse by which the hero of the necklace has been divested of about 1,300,000 livres of annual revenue, you may find some consolation that a part of this prodigious mass of riches is gone to preserve from famine some thousands of curés, who were pining in villages unobserved by Courts.

I now proceed to principles. Your Lordship very properly asserts that "the liberty of man in a state of society consists in his being subject to no law but the law enacted by the general will of the society to which he belongs." You approved of the object which the French had in view when, in the infancy of the Revolution, they were attempting to destroy arbitrary power, and to erect a temple to Liberty on its ruins. It is with surprise, then, that I find you afterwards presuming to dictate to the world a servile adoption of the British constitution. It is with indignation I perceive you "reprobate" a people for having imagined happiness and liberty more likely to flourish in the open field of a Republic than under the shade of a Monarchy. You are therefore guilty of a most glaring contradiction. Twenty-five millions of Frenchmen have felt that they could have no security for their liberties under any modification of monarchical power. They have in consequence unanimously chosen a Republic. You cannot but observe that they have only exercised that right in which, by your own confession, liberty essentially resides.

As to your arguments, by which you pretend to justify your anathemas of a Republic—if arguments they may be called—they are so concise, that I cannot but transcribe them. "I dislike a Republic for this reason, because of all forms of government, scarcely excepting the most despotic, I think a Republic the most oppressive to the bulk of the people; they are deceived in it with a show of liberty, but they live in it under the most odious of all tyrannies—the tyranny of their equals."

This passage is a singular proof of that fatality by which the advocates of error furnish weapons for their own destruction: while it is merely *assertion* in respect to a justification of your aversion to Republicanism, a strong *argument* may be drawn from it in its favour. Mr. Burke, in a philosophic lamentation over the extinction of chivalry, told us that in those times vice lost half its evil by losing all its grossness. Infatuated moralist! Your Lordship excites compassion as labouring under the same delusion.

Slavery is a bitter and a poisonous draught. We have but one consolation under it, that a Nation may dash the cup to the ground when she pleases. Do not imagine that by taking from its bitterness you weaken its deadly quality; no, by rendering it more palatable you contribute to its power of destruction. We submit without repining to the chastisements of Providence, aware that we are creatures, that opposition is vain and remonstrance impossible. But when redress is in our own power and resistance is rational, we suffer with the same humility from beings like ourselves, because we are taught from infancy that we were born in a state of inferiority to our oppressors, that they were sent into the world to scourge, and we to be scourged. Accordingly we see the bulk of mankind, actuated by these fatal prejudices, even more ready to lay themselves under the feet of *the great* than the great are to trample upon them. Now taking for granted, that in Republics men live under the tyranny of what you call their equals, the circumstance of this being the most odious of all tyrannies is what a Republican would boast of; as soon as tyranny becomes odious, the principal step is made towards its destruction. Reflecting on the degraded state of the mass of mankind, a philosopher will lament that oppression is not odious to them, that the iron, while it eats the soul, is not felt to enter into it. "Tout homme né dans l'esclavage naît pour l'esclavage, rien n'est plus certain; les esclaves perdent tout dans leurs fers, jusqu'au désir d'en sortir; ils aiment leur servitude, comme les compagnons d'Ulysse aimaient leur abrutissement."

I return to the quotation in which you reprobate Republicanism. Relying upon the temper of the times, you have surely thought little argument necessary to content what few will be hardy enough to support; the strongest of auxiliaries, imprisonment and the pillory, have left your arm little to perform. But the happiness of mankind is so closely connected with this subject, that I cannot suffer such considerations to deter me from throwing out a few hints, which may lead to a conclusion that a Republic legitimately constructed contains less of an oppressive principle than any other form of government.

Your Lordship will scarcely question that much of human misery, that the great evils which desolate States, proceed from the governors having an interest distinct from that of the governed. It should seem a natural deduction, that whatever has a tendency to identify the two must also in the same degree promote the

general welfare. As the magnitude of almost all States prevents the possibility of their enjoying a pure democracy, philosophers—from a wish, as far as is in their power, to make the governors and the governed one—will turn their thoughts to the system of universal representation, and will annex an equal importance to the suffrage of every individual. Jealous of giving up no more of the authority of the people than is necessary, they will be solicitous of finding out some method by which the office of their delegates may be confined as much as is practicable to the proposing and deliberating upon laws rather than to enacting them; reserving to the people the power of finally inscribing them in the national code. Unless this is attended to, as soon as a people has chosen representatives it no longer has a political existence, except as it is understood to retain the privilege of annihilating the trust when it shall think proper, and of resuming its original power. Sensible that at the moment of election an interest distinct from that of the general body is created, an enlightened legislator will endeavour by every possible method to diminish the operation of such interest. The first and most natural mode that presents itself is that of shortening the regular duration of this trust, in order that the man who has betrayed it may soon be superseded by a more worthy successor. But this is not enough; aware of the possibility of imposition, and of the natural tendency of power to corrupt the heart of man, a sensible Republican will think it essential that the office of legislator be not intrusted to the same man for a succession of years. He will also be induced to this wise restraint by the grand principle of identification; he will be more sure of the virtue of the legislator by knowing that, in the capacity of private citizen, to-morrow he must either smart under the oppression or bless the justice of the law which he has enacted to-day.

Perhaps in the very outset of this inquiry the principle on which I proceed will be questioned, and I shall be told that the people are not the proper judges of their own welfare. But because under every government of modern times, till the foundation of the American Republic, the bulk of mankind have appeared incapable of discerning their true interests, no conclusion can be drawn against my principle. At this moment have we not daily the strongest proofs of the success with which, in what you call the best of all monarchical governments, the popular mind may be debauched? Left to the quiet exercise of their own judgment, do

you think that the people would have thought it necessary to set fire to the house of the philosophic Priestley, and to hunt down his life like that of a traitor or a parricide? that, deprived almost of the necessaries of existence by the burden of their taxes, they would cry out, as with one voice, for a war from which not a single ray of consolation can visit them to compensate for the additional keenness with which they are about to smart under the scourge of labour, of cold, and of hunger?

Appearing, as I do, the advocate of Republicanism, let me not be misunderstood. I am well aware, from the abuse of the executive power in States, that there is not a single European nation but what affords a melancholy proof that if, at this moment, the original authority of the people should be restored, all that could be expected from such restoration would in the beginning be but a change of tyranny. Considering the nature of a Republic in reference to the present condition of Europe, your Lordship stops here; but a philosopher will extend his views much farther: having dried up the source from which flows the corruption of the public opinion, he will be sensible that the stream will go on gradually refining itself. I must add also, that the coercive power is of necessity so strong in all the old governments, that a people could not but at first make an abuse of that liberty which a legitimate Republic supposes. The animal just released from its stall will exhaust the overflow of its spirits in a round of wanton vagaries; but it will soon return to itself, and enjoy its freedom in moderate and regular delight.

But, to resume the subject of universal representation, I ought to have mentioned before, that in the choice of its representatives a people will not immorally hold out wealth as a criterion of integrity, nor lay down as a fundamental rule, that to be qualified for the trying duties of legislation a citizen should be possessed of a certain fixed property. Virtues, talents, and acquirements are all that it will look for.

Having destroyed every external object of delusion, let us now see what makes the supposition necessary that the people will mislead themselves. Your Lordship respects "peasants and mechanics when they intrude not themselves into concerns for which their education has not fitted them."

Setting aside the idea of a peasant or mechanic being a legislator, what vast education is requisite to enable him to judge amongst his neighbours which is most qualified by his industry and integrity

to be intrusted with the care of the interests of himself and of his fellow-citizens? But leaving this ground, as governments formed on such a plan proceed in a plain and open manner, their administration would require much less of what is usually called talents and experience, that is, of disciplined treachery and hoary Machiavelism; and at the same time, as it would no longer be their interest to keep the mass of the nation in ignorance, a moderate portion of useful knowledge would be universally disseminated. If your Lordship has travelled in the democratic cantons of Switzerland, you must have seen the herdsman with the staff in one hand and the book in the other. In the constituent Assembly of France was found a peasant whose sagacity was as distinguished as his integrity, whose blunt honesty overawed and baffled the refinements of hypocritical patriots. The people of Paris followed him with acclamations, and the name of Père Gerard will long be mentioned with admiration and respect through the eighty-three departments.

From these hints, if pursued further, might be demonstrated the expediency of the whole people "intruding themselves" on the office of legislation, and the wisdom of putting into force what they may claim as a right. But government is divided into two parts—the legislative and executive. The executive power you would lodge in the hands of an individual. Before we inquire into the propriety of this measure, it will be necessary to state the proper objects of the executive power in governments where the principle of universal representation is admitted. With regard to that portion of this power which is exerted in the application of the laws, it may be observed that much of it would be superseded. As laws, being but the expression of the general will, would be enacted only from an almost universal conviction of their utility, any resistance to such laws, any desire of eluding them, must proceed from a few refractory individuals. As far, then, as relates to the internal administration of the country, a Republic has a manifest advantage over a Monarchy, inasmuch as less force is requisite to compel obedience to its laws.

From the judicial tribunals of our own country, though we labour under a variety of partial and oppressive laws, we have an evident proof of the nullity of regal interference, as the king's name is confessedly a mere fiction, and justice is known to be most equitably administered when the judges are least dependent on the crown.

I have spoken of laws partial and oppressive; our penal code

is so crowded with disproportioned penalties and indiscriminate severity that a conscientious man would sacrifice, in many instances, his respect for the laws to the common feelings of humanity; and there must be a strange vice in that legislation from which can proceed laws in whose execution a man cannot be instrumental without forfeiting his self-esteem and incurring the contempt of his fellow-citizens.

But to return from this digression: with regard to the other branches of the executive government, which relate rather to original measures than to administering the law, it may be observed that the power exercised in conducting them is distinguished by almost imperceptible shades from the legislative, and that all such as admit of open discussion and of the delay attendant on public deliberations are properly the province of the representative assembly. If this observation be duly attended to, it will appear that this part of the executive power will be extremely circumscribed, will be stripped almost entirely of a deliberate capacity, and will be reduced to a mere hand or instrument. As a Republican government would leave this power to a select body destitute of the means of corruption, and whom the people, continually contributing, could at all times bring to account or dismiss, will it not necessarily ensue that a body so selected and supported would perform their simple functions with greater efficacy and fidelity than the complicated concerns of royalty can be expected to meet with in the councils of princes composed as they usually are of favourites; of men who from their wealth and interest have forced themselves into trust; and of statesmen, whose constant object is to exalt themselves by laying pitfalls for their colleagues and for their country.

I shall pursue this subject no further; but adopting your Lordship's method of argument, instead of continuing to demonstrate the superiority of a Republican executive government, I will repeat some of the objections which have been often made to monarchy, and have not been answered.

My first objection to regal government is its instability, proceeding from a variety of causes. Where monarchy is found in its greatest intensity, as in Morocco and Turkey, this observation is illustrated in a very pointed manner, and indeed is more or less striking as governments are more or less despotic. The reason is obvious: as the monarch is the chooser of his ministers, and as his own passions and caprice are in general the sole

guides of his conduct, these ministers, instead of pursuing directly the one grand object of national welfare, will make it their chief study to vary their measures according to his humours. But a minister *may* be refractory: his successor will naturally run headlong into plans totally the reverse of the former system; for if he treads in the same path, he is well aware that a similar fate will attend him. This observation will apply to each succession of kings, who, from vanity and a desire of distinction, will in general studiously avoid any step which may lead to a suspicion that they are so spiritless as to imitate their predecessor. That a similar instability is not incident to Republics is evident from their very constitution.

As from the nature of monarchy, particularly of hereditary monarchy, there must always be a vast disproportion between the duties to be performed and the powers that are to perform them; and as the measures of government, far from gaining additional vigour, are, on the contrary, enfeebled by being intrusted to one hand, what arguments can be used for allowing to the will of a single being a weight which, as history shows, will subvert that of the whole body politic? And this brings me to my grand objection to monarchy, which is drawn from the eternal nature of man. The office of king is a trial to which human virtue is not equal. Pure and universal representation, by which alone liberty can be secured, cannot, I think, exist together with monarchy. It seems madness to expect a manifestation of the *general* will, at the same time that we allow to a *particular* will that weight which it must obtain in all governments that can with any propriety be called monarchical. They must war with each other till one of them is extinguished. It was so in France and * * * I shall not pursue this topic further, but, as you are a teacher of purity of morals, I cannot but remind you of that atmosphere of corruption without which it would seem that courts cannot exist.

You seem anxious to explain what ought to be understood by the equality of men in a state of civil society; but your Lordship's success has not answered your trouble. If you had looked in the articles of the Rights of Man, you would have found your efforts superseded: "Equality, without which liberty cannot exist, is to be met with in perfection in that State in which no distinctions are admitted but such as have evidently for their object the general good;" "The end of government cannot be

attained without authorising some members of the society to command, and of course without imposing on the rest the necessity of obedience."

Here, then, is an inevitable inequality, which may be denominated that of power. In order to render this as small as possible, a legislator will be careful not to give greater force to such authority than is essential to its due execution. Government is at best but a necessary evil. Compelled to place themselves in a state of subordination, men will obviously endeavour to prevent the abuse of that superiority to which they submit; accordingly they will cautiously avoid whatever may lead those in whom it is acknowledged to suppose they hold it as a right. Nothing will more effectually contribute to this than that the person in whom authority has been lodged should occasionally descend to the level of private citizen; he will learn from it a wholesome lesson, and the people will be less liable to confound the person with the power. On this principle hereditary authority will be proscribed; and on another also—that on such a system as that of hereditary authority, no security can be had for talents adequate to the discharge of the office, and consequently the people can only feel the mortification of having humbled without having protected themselves.

Another distinction will arise amongst mankind, which, though it may be easily modified by government, exists independent of it; I mean the distinction of wealth, which always will attend superior talents and industry. It cannot be denied that the security of individual property is one of the strongest and most natural motives to induce men to bow their necks to the yoke of civil government. In order to attain this end of security to property, a legislator will proceed with impartiality. He should not suppose that, when he has insured to their proprietors the possession of lands and movables against the depredation of the necessitous, nothing remains to be done. The history of all ages has demonstrated that wealth not only can secure itself, but includes even an oppressive principle. Aware of this, and that the extremes of poverty and riches have a necessary tendency to corrupt the human heart, he will banish from his code all laws such as the unnatural monster of primogeniture, such as encourage associations against labour in the form of corporate bodies, and indeed all that monopolising system of legislation, whose baleful influence is shown in the depopulation of the country and in the necessity which reduces

the sad relicks to owe their very existence to the ostentatious bounty of their oppressors. If it is true in common life, it is still more true in governments, that we should be just before we are generous; but our legislators seem to have forgotten or despised this homely maxim. They have unjustly left unprotected that most important part of property, not less real because it has no material existence, that which ought to enable the labourer to provide food for himself and his family. I appeal to innumerable statutes, whose constant and professed object it is to lower the price of labour, to compel the workman to be *content* with arbitrary wages, evidently too small from the necessity of legal enforcement of the acceptance of them. Even from the astonishing amount of the sums raised for the support of one description of the poor may be concluded the extent and greatness of that oppression, whose effects have rendered it possible for the few to afford so much, and have shown us that such a multitude of our brothers exist in even helpless indigence. Your Lordship tells us that the science of civil government has received all the perfection of which it is capable. For my part, I am more enthusiastic. The sorrow I feel from the contemplation of this melancholy picture is not unconsolated by a comfortable hope that the class of wretches called mendicants will not much longer shock the feelings of humanity; that the miseries entailed upon the marriage of those who are not rich will no longer tempt the bulk of mankind to fly to that promiscuous intercourse to which they are impelled by the instincts of nature, and the dreadful satisfaction of escaping the prospects of infants, sad fruit of such intercourse, whom they are unable to support. If these flattering prospects be ever realised, it must be owing to some wise and salutary regulations counteracting that inequality among mankind which proceeds from the present *forced* disproportion of their possessions.

I am not an advocate for the agrarian law nor for sumptuary regulations, but I contend that the people amongst whom the law of primogeniture exists, and among whom corporate bodies are encouraged, and immense salaries annexed to useless and indeed hereditary offices, is oppressed by an inequality in the distribution of wealth which does not necessarily attend men in a state of civil society.

Thus far we have considered inequalities inseparable from civil society. But other arbitrary distinctions exist among mankind, either from choice or usurpation. I allude to titles, to stars,

ribbands, and garters, and other badges of fictitious superiority. Your Lordship will not question the grand principle on which this inquiry set out; I look upon it, then, as my duty to try the propriety of these distinctions by that criterion, and think it will be no difficult task to prove that these separations among mankind are absurd, impolitic, and immoral. Considering hereditary nobility as a reward for services rendered to the State—and it is to my charity that you owe the permission of taking up the question on this ground—what services can a man render to the State adequate to such a compensation that the making of laws, upon which the happiness of millions is to depend, shall be lodged in him and his posterity, however depraved may be their principles, however contemptible their understandings?

But here I may be accused of sophistry; I ought to subtract every idea of power from such distinction, though from the weakness of mankind it is impossible to disconnect them. What services, then, can a man render to society to compensate for the outrage done to the dignity of our nature when we bind ourselves to address him and his posterity with humiliating circumlocutions, calling him most noble, most honourable, most high, most august, serene, excellent, eminent, and so forth; when it is more than probable that such unnatural flattery will but generate vices which ought to consign him to neglect and solitude, or make him the perpetual object of the finger of scorn? And does not experience justify the observation, that where titles—a thing very rare—have been conferred as the rewards of merit, those to whom they have descended, far from being thereby animated to imitate their ancestor, have presumed upon that lustre which they supposed thrown round them, and, prodigally relying on such resources, lavished what alone was their own, their personal reputation?

It would be happy if this delusion were confined to themselves; but, alas, the world is weak enough to grant the indulgence which they assume. Vice, which is forgiven in one character, will soon cease to meet with sternness of rebuke when found in others. Even at first she will entreat pardon with confidence, assured that ere long she will be charitably supposed to stand in no need of it.

But let me ask you seriously, from the mode in which these distinctions are originally conferred, is it not almost necessary that, far from being the rewards of services rendered to the State, they should usually be the recompense of an industrious sacrifice of the general welfare to the particular aggrandisement of that

power by which they are bestowed? Let us even alter their source, and consider them as proceeding from the Nation itself, and deprived of that hereditary quality; even here I should proscribe them, and for the most evident reason—that a man's past services are no sufficient security for his future character; he who to-day merits the civic wreath may to-morrow deserve the Tarpeian rock. Besides, where respect is not perverted, where the world is not taught to reverence men without regarding their conduct, the esteem of mankind will have a very different value, and, when a proper independence is secured, will be regarded as a sufficient recompense for services however important, and will be a much surer guarantee of the continuance of such virtues as may deserve it.

I have another strong objection to nobility, which is that it has a necessary tendency to dishonour labour, a prejudice which extends far beyond its own circle; that it binds down whole ranks of men to idleness, while it gives the enjoyment of a reward which exceeds the hopes of the most active exertions of human industry. The languid tedium of this noble repose must be dissipated, and gaming, with the tricking manœuvres of the horse-race, afford occupation to hours which it would be happy for mankind had they been totally unemployed.

Reflecting on the corruption of the public manners, does your Lordship shudder at the prostitution which miserably deluges our streets? You may find the cause in our aristocratical prejudices. Are you disgusted with the hypocrisy and sycophancy of our intercourse in private life? You may find the cause in the necessity of dissimulation which we have established by regulations which oblige us to address as our superiors, indeed as our masters, men whom we cannot but internally despise. Do you lament that such large portions of mankind should stoop to occupations unworthy the dignity of their nature? You may find in the pride and luxury thought necessary to nobility how such servile arts are encouraged. Besides, where the most honourable of the Land do not blush to accept such offices as groom of the bedchamber, master of the hounds, lords in waiting, captain of the honourable band of gentlemen-pensioners, is it astonishing that the bulk of the people should not ask of an occupation, what is it? but what may be gained by it?

If the long equestrian train of equipage should make your Lordship sigh for the poor who are pining in hunger, you will find that little is thought of snatching the bread from their mouths to eke out the "*necessary splendour*" of nobility.

I have not time to pursue this subject farther, but am so strongly impressed with the baleful influence of aristocracy and nobility upon human happiness and virtue, that if, as I am persuaded, monarchy cannot exist without such supporters, I think that reason sufficient for the preference I have given to the Republican system.

It is with reluctance that I quit the subjects I have just touched upon; but the nature of this Address does not permit me to continue the discussion. I proceed to what more immediately relates to this Kingdom at the present crisis.

You ask with triumphant confidence, to what other law are the people of England subject than the general will of the society to which they belong? Is your Lordship to be told that acquiescence is not choice, and that obedience is not freedom? If there is a single man in Great Britain who has no suffrage in the election of a representative, the will of the society of which he is a member is not generally expressed; he is a Helot in that society. You answer the question, so confidently put, in this singular manner: "The King, we are all justly persuaded, has not the inclination—and we all know that, if he had the inclination, he has not the power—to substitute his will in the place of law. The House of Lords has no such power. The House of Commons has no such power." This passage, so artfully and unconstitutionally framed to agree with the delusions of the moment, cannot deceive a thinking reader. The expression of your full persuasion of the upright intentions of the King can only be the language of flattery. You are not to be told that it is constitutionally a maxim not to attribute to the person of the King the measures and misconduct of government. Had you chosen to speak, as you ought to have done, openly and explicitly, you must have expressed your just persuasion and implicit confidence in the integrity, moderation, and wisdom of his Majesty's ministers. Have you forgot the avowed ministerial maxims of Sir Robert Walpole? Are you ignorant of the overwhelming corruption of the present day?

You seem unconscious of the absurdity of separating what is inseparable even in imagination. Would it have been any consolation to the miserable Romans under the second triumvirate to have been asked insultingly, Is it Octavius, is it Anthony, or is it Lepidus that has caused this bitterness of affliction? and when the answer could not be returned with certainty, to have been reproached that their sufferings were imaginary? The fact is that the King *and* Lords *and* Commons, by what is termed the omnipotence

of Parliament, have constitutionally the right of enacting whatever laws they please, in defiance of the petitions or remonstrances of the nation. They have the power of doubling our enormous debt of 240 millions, and *may* pursue measures which could never be supposed the emanation of the general will without concluding the people stripped of reason, of sentiment, and even of that first instinct which prompts them to preserve their own existence.

I congratulate your Lordship upon your enthusiastic fondness for the judicial proceedings of this country. I am happy to find you have passed through life without having your fleece torn from your back in the thorny labyrinth of litigation. But you have not lived always in colleges, and must have passed by some victims, whom it cannot be supposed, without a reflection on your heart, that you have forgotten. Here I am reminded of what I have said on the subject of representation—to be qualified for the office of legislation you should have felt like the bulk of mankind; their sorrows should be familiar to you, of which, if you are ignorant, how can you redress them? As a member of the assembly which, from a confidence in its experience, sagacity, and wisdom, the constitution has invested with the supreme appellate jurisdiction to determine the most doubtful points of an intricate jurisprudence, your Lordship cannot, I presume, be ignorant of the consuming expense of our never-ending process, the verbosity of unintelligible statutes, and the perpetual contrariety in our judicial decisions.

“The greatest freedom that can be enjoyed by man in a state of civil society, the greatest security that can be given with respect to the protection of his character, property, personal liberty, limb, and life, is afforded to every individual by our present constitution.”

“Let it never be forgotten by ourselves, and let us impress the observation upon the hearts of our children, that we are in possession of both (liberty and equality), of as much of both as can be consistent with the end for which civil society was introduced among mankind.”

Many of my readers will hardly believe me when I inform them that these passages are copied verbatim from your Appendix. Mr. Burke roused the indignation of all ranks of men when, by a refinement in cruelty superior to that which in the East yokes the living to the dead, he strove to persuade us that we and our posterity to the end of time were riveted to a constitution by the

indissoluble compact of a dead parchment, and were bound to cherish a corse at the bosom when reason might call aloud that it should be entombed. Your Lordship aims at the same detestable object by means more criminal, because more dangerous and insidious. Attempting to lull the people of England into a belief that any inquiries directed towards the nature of liberty and equality can in no other way lead to their happiness than by convincing them that they have already arrived at perfection in the science of government, what is your object but to exclude them for ever from the most fruitful field of human knowledge? Besides, it is another cause to execrate this doctrine that the consequence of such fatal delusion would be that they must entirely draw off their attention, not only from the government, but from their governors; that the stream of public vigilance, far from clearing and enriching the prospect of society, would by its stagnation consign it to barrenness, and by its putrefaction infect it with death. You have aimed an arrow at liberty and philosophy, the eyes of the human race; why, like the inveterate enemy of Philip, in putting your name to the shaft, did you not declare openly its destination?

As a teacher of religion, your Lordship cannot be ignorant of a class of breaches of duty which may be denominated faults of omission. You profess to give your opinions upon the present turbulent crisis, expressing a wish that they may have some effect in tranquillising the minds of the people. Whence comes it, then, that the two grand causes of this working of the popular mind are passed over in silence? Your Lordship's conduct may bring to mind the story of a company of strolling comedians, who gave out the play of *Hamlet* as the performance of the evening. The audience were not a little surprised to be told, on the drawing up of the curtain, that from circumstances of particular convenience it was hoped they would dispense with the omission of the character of—Hamlet! But to be serious—for the subject is serious in the extreme—from your silence respecting the general call for a parliamentary reform, supported by your assertion that we at present enjoy as great a proportion of liberty and equality as is consistent with civil society, what can be supposed but that you are a determined enemy to the redress of what the people of England call and feel to be grievances?

From your omitting to speak upon the war, and your general disapprobation of French measures and French principles, expressed particularly at this moment, we are necessarily led also

to conclude that you have no wish to dispel an infatuation which is now giving up to the sword so large a portion of the poor, and consigning the rest to the more slow and more painful consumption of want. I could excuse your silence on this point, as it would ill become an English bishop at the close of the eighteenth century to make the pulpit the vehicle of exhortations which would have disgraced the incendiary of the Crusades, the hermit Peter. But you have deprived yourself of the plea of decorum by giving no opinion on the reform of the legislature. As undoubtedly you have some secret reason for the reservation of your sentiments on this latter head, I cannot but apply the same reason to the former. Upon what principle is your conduct to be explained? In some parts of England it is quaintly said, when a drunken man is seen reeling towards his home, that he has business on both sides of the road. Observing your Lordship's tortuous path, the spectators will be far from insinuating that you have partaken of Mr. Burke's intoxicating bowl; they will content themselves, shaking their heads as you stagger along, with remarking that you have business on both sides of the road.

The friends of Liberty congratulate themselves upon the odium under which they are at present labouring, as the causes which have produced it have obliged so many of her false adherents to disclaim with officious earnestness any desire to promote her interest; nor are they disheartened by the diminution which their body is supposed already to have sustained. Conscious that an enemy lurking in our ranks is ten times more formidable than when drawn out against us, that the unblushing aristocracy of a Maury or a Cazalès is far less dangerous than the insidious mask of patriotism assumed by a La Fayette or a Mirabeau, we thank you for your desertion. Political convulsions have been said particularly to call forth concealed abilities, but it has been seldom observed how vast is their consumption of them. Reflecting upon the fate of the greatest portion of the members of the constituent and legislative assemblies, we must necessarily be struck with a prodigious annihilation of human talents. Aware that this necessity is attached to a struggle for Liberty, we are the less sorry that we can expect no advantage from the mental endowments of your Lordship.

[EXTRACTS FROM]
THE BORDERERS

Though written nearly fifty years earlier, *The Borderers* was first published in the volume of 1842. Wordsworth's account of the work may be traced in the Preface reprinted here, and in two later notes. The first was written in 1842:

This Dramatic Piece, as noted in its title-page, was composed in 1795-6. It lay nearly from that time till within the last two or three months unregarded among my papers, without being mentioned even to my most intimate friends. Having, however, impressions upon my mind which made me unwilling to destroy the MS., I determined to undertake the responsibility of publishing it during my own life, rather than impose upon my successors the task of deciding its fate.

The Fenwick Note says of the form of the play:

My care was almost exclusively given to the passions and the characters, and the position in which the persons in the Drama stood relatively to each other, that the reader (for I had then no thought of the Stage) might be moved, and to a degree instructed, by lights penetrating somewhat into the depths of our nature. In this endeavour, I cannot think, upon a very late review, that I have failed. As to the scene and period of action, little more was required for my purpose than the absence of established Law and Government; so that the agents might be at liberty to act on their own impulses. . . . Much about the same time, but a little after, Coleridge was employed in writing his tragedy of "Remorse", and it happened that soon after, through one of the Mr. Pooles, Mr. Knight the actor heard that we had been engaged in writing Plays, and upon his suggestion mine was curtailed, and I believe Coleridge's also was offered to Mr. Harris, manager of Covent Garden. For myself, I had no hope nor even a wish (tho' a successful play would, in the then state of my finances, have been a most welcome piece of good fortune) that he should accept my performance; so that I incurred no disappointment when the piece was *judiciously* returned as not calculated for the Stage. In this judgment I entirely concurred.

The Preface was first published by de Selincourt in the *Nineteenth Century and After* of November 1926 and reprinted in his *Oxford Lectures on Poetry* (1934), from which this text is taken.

THE BORDERERS

Preface

LET us suppose a young man of great intellectual powers, yet without any solid principles of genuine benevolence. His master passions are pride and the love of distinction. He has deeply imbibed a spirit of enterprise in a tumultuous age. He goes into the world and is betrayed into a great crime.—That influence on which all his happiness is built immediately deserts him. His talents are robbed of their weight, his exertions are unavailing, and he quits the world in disgust, with strong misanthropic feelings. In his retirement, he is impelled to examine the unreasonableness of established opinions; and the force of his mind exhausts itself in constant efforts to separate the elements of virtue and vice. It is his pleasure and his consolation to hunt out whatever is bad in actions usually esteemed virtuous, and to detect the good in actions which the universal sense of mankind teaches us to reprobate. While the general exertion of his intellect seduces him from the remembrance of his own crime, the particular conclusions to which he is led have a tendency to reconcile him to himself. His feelings are interested in making him a moral sceptic, and as his scepticism increases he is raised in his own esteem. After this process has been continued some time his natural energy and restlessness impel him again into the world. In this state, pressed by the recollection of his guilt, he seeks relief from two sources, action and meditation. Of actions those are most attractive which best exhibit his own powers, partly from the original pride of his own character, and still more because the loss of authority and influence which followed upon his crime brought along with it those tormenting sensations by which he is assailed. The recovery of his original importance and the exhibition of his own powers are, therefore, in his mind almost identified with the extinction of those powerful feelings which attend the recollection of his guilt. Perhaps there is no cause which has greater weight in preventing the return of bad men to virtue than that good actions being for the most part in their nature silent and regularly progressive, they do not present those sudden results which can afford sufficient stimulus to a troubled mind. In processes of vice the effects are more frequently

immediate, palpable and extensive. Power is much more easily manifested in destroying than in creating. A child, Rousseau has observed, will tear in pieces fifty toys before he will think of making one. From these causes, assisted by disgust and misanthropic feeling, the character we are now contemplating will have a strong tendency to vice. His energies are most impressively manifest in works of devastation. He is the Orlando of Ariosto, the Cardenio of Cervantes, who lays waste the groves that should shelter him. He has rebelled against the world and the laws of the world, and he regards them as tyrannical masters; convinced that he is right in some of his conclusions, he nourishes a contempt for mankind the more dangerous because he has been led to it by reflexion. Being in the habit of considering the world as a body which is in some sort of war with him, he has a feeling borrowed from that habit which gives an additional zest to his hatred of those members of society whom he hates and to his own contempt of those whom he despises. Add to this, that a mind fond of nourishing sentiments of contempt will be prone to the admission of those feelings which are considered under any uncommon bond of relation (as must be the case with a man who has quarrelled with the world), and the feelings will mutually strengthen each other. In this morbid state of mind he cannot exist without occupation, he requires constant provocations, all his pleasures are prospective, he is perpetually invoking a phantom, he commits new crimes to drive away the memory of the past. But the lenitives of his pain are twofold, meditation as well as action. Accordingly, his reason is almost exclusively employed in justifying his past enormities and in enabling him to commit new ones. He is perpetually imposing upon himself, he has a sophism for every crime. The *mild* effusions of thought, the milk of human reason are unknown to him. His imagination is powerful, being strengthened by the habit of picturing possible forms of society where his crimes would be no longer crimes, and he would enjoy that estimation to which, from his intellectual attainments, he deems himself entitled. The nicer shades of manners he disregards; but whenever upon looking back upon past ages, or in surveying the practices of different countries in the age in which he lives, he finds such contrarieties as seem to affect the principles of *morals*, he exults over his discovery, and applies it to his heart as the dearest of consolations. Such a mind cannot but discover some truths, but he is unable to profit by them, and in his hands they become instruments of evil.

He presses truth and falsehood into the same service. He looks at society through an optical glass of a peculiar tint; something of the forms of objects he takes from objects, but their colour is exclusively what he gives them; it is one, and it is his own. Having indulged a habit, dangerous in a man who has fallen, of dallying with moral calculations, he becomes an empiric, and a daring and unfeeling empiric. He disguises from himself his own malignity by assuming the character of a speculator in morals, and one who has the hardihood to realize his speculations.

It will easily be perceived that to such a mind those enterprizes which are most extraordinary will in time appear the most inviting. His appetite from being exhausted becomes unnatural. Accordingly he will struggle so to characterize and to exalt actions little in themselves by a forced greatness of manner, and will chequer and degrade enterprizes great in their atrocity by grotesque littleness of manner and fantastic obliquities. He is like a worn out voluptuary—he finds his temptation in strangeness, he is unable to suppress a low hankering after the double entendre in vice; yet his thirst after the extraordinary buoys him up, and supported by a habit of constant reflexion he frequently breaks out into what has the appearance of greatness; and in sudden emergencies, when he is called upon by surprize and thrown out of the path of his regular habits, or when dormant associations are awakened tracing the revolutions through which his character has passed, in painting his former self he really *is* great.

Benefits conferred on a man like this will be the seeds of a worse feeling than ingratitude. They will give birth to positive hatred. Let him be deprived of power, though by means which he despises, and he will never forgive. It will scarcely be denied that such a mind, by very slight external motives, may be led to the commission of the greatest enormities. Let its malignant feelings be fixed on a particular object, and the rest follows of itself.

Having shaken off the obligations of religion and morality in a dark and tempestuous age, it is probable that such a character will be infected with a tinge of superstition. The period in which he lives teems with great events which he feels he cannot controul. That influence which his pride makes him unwilling to allow to his fellow-men he has no reluctance to ascribe to invisible agents: his pride impells him to superstition and shapes the nature of his belief: his creed is his own: it is made and not adopted.

A character like this, or some of its features at least, I have

attempted to delineate in the following drama. I have introduced him deliberately persecuting the destruction of an amiable young man by the most atrocious means, and with a pertinacity, as it should seem, not to be accounted for but on the supposition of the most malignant injuries. No such injuries, however, appear to have been sustained. What then are his motives? First it must be observed that to make the non-existence of a common motive itself a motive to action is a practice which we are never so prone to attribute exclusively to madmen as when we forget ourselves. Our love of the marvellous is not confined to external things. There is no object on which it settles with more delight than on our own minds. This habit is in the very essence of the habit which we are delineating.

But there are particles of that poisonous mineral of which Iago speaks gnawing his inwards; his malevolent feelings are excited, and he hates the more deeply because he feels he ought not to hate.

We all know that the dissatisfaction accompanying the first impulses towards a criminal action, where the mind is familiar with guilt, acts as a stimulus to proceed in that action. Uneasiness must be driven away by fresh uneasiness, obstinacy, waywardness and wilful blindness are alternatives resorted to, till there is an universal insurrection of every depraved feeling of the heart.

Besides, in a course of criminal conduct every fresh step that we make appears a justification of the one that preceded it, it seems to bring again the moment of liberty and choice; it banishes the idea of repentance, and seems to set remorse at defiance. Every time we plan a fresh accumulation of our guilt we have restored to us something like that original state of mind, that perturbed pleasure, which first made the crime attractive.

If after these general remarks I am asked what are Rivers's¹ motives to the atrocity detailed in the drama? I answer they are founded chiefly on the very constitution of his character; in his pride which borders even upon madness; in his restless disposition; in his disturbed mind; in his superstition; in irresistible propensities to embody in practical experiments his worst and most extravagant speculations; in his thoughts and in his feelings; in his perverted reason justifying his perverted instincts. The general moral intended to be impressed by the delineation of such a character is

¹ [Rivers was Wordsworth's earlier name for the character called Oswald in the published version of the play.]

obvious—it is to shew the dangerous use which may be made of reason when a man has committed a great crime.

There is a kind of superstition which makes us shudder, when we find moral sentiments to which we attach a sacred importance applied to vicious purposes. In real life this is done every day, and we do not feel the disgust. The difference is here. In works of imagination we see the motive and the end. In real life we rarely see either the one or the other; and when the distress comes it prevents us from attending to the cause. This superstition of which I have spoken is not without its use; yet it appears to be one great source of our vices; it is our constant engine in seducing each other. We are lulled asleep by its agency, and betrayed before we know that an attempt is made to betray us.

I have endeavoured to shake this prejudice, persuaded that in so doing I was well employed. It has been a further object with me to shew that from abuses interwoven with the texture of society a bad man may be furnished with sophisms in support of his crimes which it would be difficult to answer.

One word more upon the subject of motives. In private life what is more common than when we hear of lawsuits prosecuted to the utter ruin of the parties, and the most deadly feuds in families, to find them attributed to trifling and apparently inadequate sources? But when our malignant passions operate the original causes which called them forth are soon supplanted, yet when we account for the effect we forget the immediate impulse, and the whole is attributed to the force from which the first motion was received. The vessel keeps sailing on, and we attribute her progress in the voyage to the ropes which first towed her out of harbour.

To this must be added that we are too apt to apply our own moral sentiments as a measure of the conduct of others. We insensibly suppose that a criminal action assumes the same form to the agent as to ourselves. We forget that his feelings and his reason are equally busy in contracting its dimensions and pleading for its necessity.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

MARMADUKE.	}	<i>Of the Band of Borderers.</i>
OSWALD.		
WALLACE.		
LACY.		
LENNOX.		
HERBERT.		
WILFRED, <i>Servant to</i> MARMADUKE.		
Host.		
Forester.		
ELDRED, <i>a Peasant.</i>		
<i>Peasant, Pilgrims, &c.</i>		
IDONEA.		
Female Beggar.		
ELEANOR, <i>Wife to</i> ELDRED.		

SCENE, *Borders of England and Scotland.*

TIME, *The Reign of Henry III.*

[EXTRACTS FROM]
THE BORDERERS
A TRAGEDY

READERS already acquainted with my Poems will recognise, in the following composition, some eight or ten lines, which I have not scrupled to retain in the places where they originally stood. It is proper however to add that they would not have been used elsewhere, if I had foreseen the time when I might be induced to publish this Tragedy.

February 28, 1842.

[In the reign of Henry III a band of outlaws were assembled by the good Marmaduke to redress grievances on the Scottish border. Oswald, a depraved member of the Borderers, persuades Marmaduke, by the false evidence of a beggar-woman, that the baron Herbert wishes to betray his own daughter, Idonea, to the evil Lord Clifford. Marmaduke, who loves Idonea, contrives the death of Lord Herbert. The Borderers learn that they have been tricked into crime by Oswald, and in Act III discuss his motives.]

SCENE, *An eminence, a Beacon on the summit.*

LACY, WALLACE, LENNOX, &c., &c.

Several of the Band (confusedly).

But patience!

One of the Band. Curses on that Traitor, Oswald!—
Our Captain made a prey to foul device!—

Len. (to WALLACE). His tool, the wandering Beggar,
made last night

A plain confession, such as leaves no doubt,
Knowing what otherwise we know too well,
That she revealed the truth. Stand by me now;
For rather would I have a nest of vipers
Between my breast-plate and my skin, than make
Oswald my special enemy, if you
Deny me your support.

Lacy. We have been fooled—
But for the motive?

Wal. Natures such as his
Spin motives out of their own bowels, Lacy!
I learn'd this when I was a Confessor.
I know him well; there needs no other motive
Than that most strange incontinence in crime
Which haunts this Oswald. Power is life to him
And breath and being; where he cannot govern,
He will destroy.

Lacy. To have been trapped like moles!—
Yes, you are right, we need not hunt for motives:
There is no crime from which this Man would shrink;
He recks not human law; and I have noticed
That often when the name of God is uttered,
A sudden blankness overspreads his face.

Len. Yet, reasoner as he is, his pride has built
Some uncouth superstition of its own.

Wal. I have seen traces of it.

Len. Once he headed
A band of Pirates in the Norway seas;
And when the King of Denmark summoned him
To the oath of fealty, I well remember,
'Twas a strange answer that he made; he said,
"I hold of Spirits, and the Sun in heaven."

Lacy. He is no madman.

Wal. A most subtle doctor
Were that man, who could draw the line that parts
Pride and her daughter, Cruelty, from Madness,
That should be scourged, not pitied. Restless Minds,
Such Minds as find amid their fellow-men
No heart that loves them, none that they can love,
Will turn perforce and seek for sympathy
In dim relation to imagined Beings.

[In the next scene Oswald tries to persuade Marmaduke that in murdering Herbert he has asserted a proper independence of society.]

SCENE, *The Wood on the edge of the Moor.*

MARMADUKE (*alone*)

Mar. Deep, deep and vast, vast beyond human thought,
Yet calm.—I could believe, that there was here

The only quiet heart on earth. In terror,
Remembered terror, there is peace and rest.

Enter OSWALD.

Osw. Ha! my dear Captain.

Mar. A later meeting, Oswald,
Would have been better timed.

Osw. Alone, I see;
You have done your duty. I had hopes, which now
I feel that you will justify.

Mar. I had fears,
From which I have freed myself—but 'tis my wish
To be alone, and therefore we must part.

Osw. Nay, then—I am mistaken. There's a weakness
About you still; you talk of solitude—
I am your friend.

Mar. What need of this assurance
At any time? and why given now?

Osw. Because
You are now in truth my Master; you have taught me
What there is not another living man
Had strength to teach;—and therefore gratitude
Is bold, and would relieve itself by praise.

Mar. Wherefore press this on me?

Osw. Because I feel
That you have shown, and by a signal instance,
How they who would be just must seek the rule
By diving for it into their own bosoms.
To-day you have thrown off a tyranny
That lives but in the torpid acquiescence
Of our emasculated souls, the tyranny
Of the world's masters, with the musty rules
By which they uphold their craft from age to age:
You have obeyed the only law that sense
Submits to recognise; the immediate law,
From the clear light of circumstances, flashed
Upon an independent Intellect.
Henceforth new prospects open on your path;
Your faculties should grow with the demand;
I still will be your friend, will cleave to you
Through good and evil, obloquy and scorn,

Oft as they dare to follow on your steps.

Mar. I would be left alone.

Osw. (*exultingly*). I know your motives!
I am not of the world's presumptuous judges,
Who damn where they can neither see nor feel,
With a hard-hearted ignorance; your struggles
I witness'd, and now hail your victory.

Mar. Spare me awhile that greeting.

Osw. It may be,
That some there are, squeamish, half-thinking cowards,
Who will turn pale upon you, call you murderer,
And you will walk in solitude among them.
A mighty evil for a strong-built mind!—
Join twenty tapers of unequal height
And light them joined, and you will see the less
How 'twill burn down the taller; and they all
Shall prey upon the tallest. Solitude!—
The Eagle lives in Solitude!

Mar. Even so,
The Sparrow so on the house-top, and I,
The weakest of God's creatures, stand resolved
To abide the issue of my act, alone.

Osw. Now would you? and for ever?—My young Friend,
As time advances either we become
The prey or masters of our own past deeds.
Fellowship we *must* have, willing or no;
And if good Angels fail, slack in their duty,
Substitutes, turn our faces where we may,
Are still forthcoming; some which, though they bear
Ill names, can render no ill services,
In recompense for what themselves required.
So meet extremes in this mysterious world,
And opposites thus melt into each other.

Mar. Time, since Man first drew breath, has never moved
With such a weight upon his wings as now;
But they will soon be lightened.

Osw. Ay, look up—
Cast round you your mind's eye, and you will learn
Fortitude is the child of Enterprise:
Great actions move our admiration, chiefly
Because they carry in themselves an earnest

That we can suffer greatly.

Mar. Very true.

Osw. Action is transitory—a step, a blow,
The motion of a muscle—this way or that—
'Tis done, and in the after vacancy
We wonder at ourselves like men betrayed:
Suffering is permanent, obscure and dark,
And shares the nature of infinity.

Mar. Truth—and I feel it.

Osw. What! if you had bid
Eternal farewell to unmingled joy
And the light dancing of the thoughtless heart;
It is the toy of fools, and little fit
For such a world as this. The wise abjure
All thoughts whose idle composition lives
In the entire forgetfulness of pain.
—I see I have disturbed you.

Mar. By no means.

Osw. Compassion!—pity!—pride can do without them;
And what if you should never know them more!—
He is a puny soul who, feeling pain,
Finds ease because another feels it too.
If e'er I open out this heart of mine
It shall be for a nobler end—to teach
And not to purchase puling sympathy.
—Nay, you are pale.

Mar. It may be so.

Osw. Remorse—
It cannot live with thought; think on, think on,
And it will die. What! in this universe,
Where the least things control the greatest, where
The faintest breath that breathes can move a world,
What! feel remorse, where, if a cat had sneezed,
A leaf had fallen, the thing had never been
Whose very shadow gnaws us to the vitals.

Mar. Now, whither are you wandering? That a man
So used to suit his language to the time,
Should thus so widely differ from himself—
It is most strange.

Osw. Murder!—what's in the word!—
I have no cases by me ready made

THE BORDERERS

To fit all deeds. Carry him to the Camp!—
A shallow project;—you of late have seen
More deeply, taught us that the institutes
Of Nature, by a cunning usurpation
Banished from human intercourse, exist
Only in our relations to the brutes
That make the fields their dwelling. If a snake
Crawl from beneath our feet we do not ask
A license to destroy him: our good governors
Hedge in the life of every pest and plague
That bears the shape of man; and for what purpose,
But to protect themselves from extirpation?—
This flimsy barrier you have overleaped.

Mar. My Office is fulfilled—the Man is now
Delivered to the Judge of all things.

Osw. Dead!

Mar. I have borne my burthen to its destined end.

Osw. This instant we'll return to our Companions—
Oh how I long to see their faces again!

[Finally, in Act IV, Oswald relates to Marmaduke his former history and explains his desire to involve Marmaduke in a similar crime to his.]

Oswald

This day's event has laid on me the duty
Of opening out my story; you must hear it,
And without further preface.—In my youth,
Except for that abatement which is paid
By envy as a tribute to desert,
I was the pleasure of all hearts, the darling
Of every tongue—as you are now. You've heard
That I embarked for Syria. On our voyage
Was hatched among the crew a foul Conspiracy
Against my honour, in the which our Captain
Was, I believed, prime Agent. The wind fell;
We lay becalmed week after week, until
The water of the vessel was exhausted;
I felt a double fever in my veins,
Yet rage suppressed itself;—to a deep stillness
Did my pride tame my pride;—for many days,
On a dead sea under a burning sky,

I brooded o'er my injuries, deserted
By man and nature;—if a breeze had blown,
It might have found its way into my heart,
And I had been—no matter—do you mark me?

Mar. Quick—to the point—if any untold crime
Doth haunt your memory.

Osw. Patience, hear me further!—
One day in silence did we drift at noon
By a bare rock, narrow, and white, and bare;
No food was there, no drink, no grass, no shade,
No tree, nor jutting eminence, nor form
Inanimate large as the body of man,
Nor any living thing whose lot of life
Might stretch beyond the measure of one moon.
To dig for water on the spot, the Captain
Landed with a small troop, myself being one:
There I reproached him with his treachery.
Imperious at all times, his temper rose;
He struck me; and that instant had I killed him,
And put an end to his insolence, but my Comrades
Rushed in between us: then did I insist
(All hated him, and I was stung to madness)
That we should leave him there, alive!—we did so.

Mar. And he was famished?

Osw. Naked was the spot;
Methinks I see it now—how in the sun
Its stony surface glittered like a shield;
And in that miserable place we left him,
Alone but for a swarm of minute creatures
Not one of which could help him while alive,
Or mourn him dead.

Mar. A man by men cast off,
Left without burial! nay, not dead nor dying,
But standing, walking, stretching forth his arms,
In all things like ourselves, but in the agony
With which he called for mercy;—and—even so—
He was forsaken?

Osw. There is a power in sounds:
The cries he uttered might have stopped the boat
That bore us through the water——

Mar. You returned

Upon that dismal hearing—did you not?

Osw. Some scoffed at him with hellish mockery,
And laughed so loud it seemed that the smooth sea
Did from some distant region echo us.

Mar. We all are of one blood, our veins are filled
At the same poisonous fountain!

Osw. 'Twas an island
Only by sufferance of the winds and waves,
Which with their foam could cover it at will.
I know not how he perished; but the calm,
The same dead calm, continued many days.

Mar. But his own crime had brought on him this doom,
His wickedness prepared it; these expedients
Are terrible, yet ours is not the fault.

Osw. The man was famished, and was innocent!

Mar. Impossible!

Osw. The man had never wronged me.

Mar. Banish the thought, crush it, and be at peace.
His guilt was marked—these things could never be
Were there not eyes that see, and for good ends,
Where ours are baffled.

Osw. I had been deceived.

Mar. And from that hour the miserable man
No more was heard of?

Osw. I had been betrayed.

Mar. And he found no deliverance!

Osw. The Crew

Gave me a hearty welcome; they had laid
The plot to rid themselves, at any cost,
Of a tyrannic Master whom they loathed.
So we pursued our voyage: when we landed,
The tale was spread abroad; my power at once
Shrunk from me; plans and schemes, and lofty hopes—
All vanished. I gave way—do you attend!

Mar. The Crew deceived you?

Osw. Nay, command yourself.

Mar. It is a dismal night—how the wind howls!

Osw. I hid my head within a Convent, there
Lay passive as a dormouse in mid winter.
That was no life for me—I was o'erthrown,
But not destroyed.

Mar. The proofs—you ought to have seen
The guilt—have touched it—felt it at your heart—
As I have done.

Osw. A fresh tide of Crusaders
Drove by the place of my retreat: three nights
Did constant meditation dry my blood;
Three sleepless nights I passed in sounding on,
Through words and things, a dim and perilous way;
And, wheresoe'er I turned me, I beheld
A slavery compared to which the dungeon
And clanking chains are perfect liberty.
You understand me—I was comforted;
I saw that every possible shape of action
Might lead to good—I saw it and burst forth
Thirsting for some of those exploits that fill
The earth for sure redemption of lost peace.
(*Marking MARMADUKE's countenance.*)

Nay, you have had the worst. Ferocity
Subsided in a moment, like a wind
That drops down dead out of a sky it vexed.
And yet I had within me evermore
A salient spring of energy; I mounted
From action up to action with a mind
That never rested—without meat or drink
Have I lived many days—my sleep was bound
To purposes of reason—not a dream
But had a continuity and substance
That waking life had never power to give.

Mar. O wretched Human-kind!—Until the mystery
Of all this world is solved, well may we envy
The worm, that, underneath a stone whose weight
Would crush the lion's paw with mortal anguish,
Doth lodge, and feed, and coil, and sleep, in safety.
Fell not the wrath of Heaven upon those traitors?

Osw. Give not to them a thought. From Palestine
We marched to Syria: oft I left the Camp,
When all that multitude of hearts was still,
And followed on, through woods of gloomy cedar,
Into deep chasms troubled by roaring streams;
Or from the top of Lebanon surveyed
The moonlight desert, and the moonlight sea:

In these my lonely wanderings I perceived
What mighty objects do impress their forms
To elevate our intellectual being;
And felt, if aught on earth deserves a curse,
'Tis that worst principle of ill which dooms
A thing so great to perish self-consumed.
—So much for my remorse!

Mar. Unhappy Man!

Osw. When from these forms I turned to contemplate
The World's opinions and her usages,
I seemed a Being who had passed alone
Into a region of futurity,
Whose natural element was freedom——

Mar. Stop—

I may not, cannot, follow thee.

Osw. You must.

I had been nourished by the sickly food
Of popular applause. I now perceived
That we are praised, only as men in us
Do recognise some image of themselves,
An abject counterpart of what they are,
Or the empty thing that they would wish to be.
I felt that merit has no surer test
Than obloquy; that, if we wish to serve
The world in substance, not deceive by show,
We must become obnoxious to its hate,
Or fear disguised in simulated scorn.

Mar. I pity, can forgive, you; but those wretches—
That monstrous perfidy!

Osw. Keep down your wrath.
False Shame discarded, spurious Fame despised,
Twin sisters both of Ignorance, I found
Life stretched before me smooth as some broad way
Cleared for a monarch's progress. Priests might spin
Their veil, but not for me—'twas in fit place
Among its kindred cobwebs. I had been,
And in that dream had left my native land,
One of Love's simple bondsmen—the soft chain
Was off for ever; and the men, from whom
This liberation came, you would destroy:
Join me in thanks for their blind services.

Mar. 'Tis a strange aching that, when we would curse
And cannot.—You have betrayed me—I have done—
I am content—I know that he is guiltless—
That both are guiltless, without spot or stain,
Mutually consecrated. Poor old Man!
And I had heart for this, because thou loved'st
Her who from very infancy had been
Light to thy path, warmth to thy blood!—Together
(*Turning to OSWALD.*)

We propped his steps, he leaned upon us both.

Osw. Ay, we are coupled by a chain of adamant;
Let us be fellow-labourers, then, to enlarge
Man's intellectual empire. We subsist
In slavery; all is slavery; we receive
Laws, but we ask not whence those laws have come;
We need an inward sting to goad us on.

Mar. Have you betrayed me? Speak to that.

Osw. The mask,

Which for a season I have stooped to wear,
Must be cast off.—Know then that I was urged,
(For other impulse let it pass) was driven,
To seek for sympathy, because I saw
In you a mirror of my youthful self;
I would have made us equal once again,
But that was a vain hope. You have struck home,
With a few drops of blood cut short the business;
Therein for ever you must yield to me.
But what is done will save you from the blank
Of living without knowledge that you live:
Now you are suffering—for the future day,
'Tis his who will command it.—Think of my story—
Herbert is *innocent*.

Mar. (*in a faint voice, and doubtingly*). You do but echo
My own wild words?

Osw. Young Man, the seed must lie
Hid in the earth, or there can be no harvest;
'Tis Nature's law. What I have done in darkness
I will avow before the face of day.
Herbert is *innocent*.

Mar. What fiend could prompt
This action? Innocent!—oh, breaking heart!—

Alive or dead, I'll find him. (*Exit.*)
Osw. Alive—perdition! (*Exit.*)

[Marmaduke tries but fails to save Lord Herbert and in Act V determines upon voluntary exile.]

Mar. Wallace, upon these Borders,
 Many there be whose eyes will not want cause
 To weep that I am gone. Brothers in arms!
 Raise on that dreary Waste a monument
 That may record my story: nor let words—
 Few must they be, and delicate in their touch
 As light itself—be there withheld from Her
 Who, through most wicked arts, was made an orphan
 By One who would have died a thousand times,
 To shield her from a moment's harm. To you,
 Wallace and Wilfred, I commend the Lady,
 By lowly nature reared, as if to make her
 In all things worthier of that noble birth,
 Whose long-suspended rights are now on the eve
 Of restoration: with your tenderest care
 Watch over her, I pray—sustain her——

Several of the band (eagerly). Captain!

Mar. No more of that; in silence hear my doom:
 A hermitage has furnished fit relief
 To some offenders; other penitents,
 Less patient in their wretchedness, have fallen,
 Like the old Roman, on their own sword's point.
 They had their choice: a wanderer *must I* go,
 The Spectre of that innocent Man, my guide.
 No human ear shall ever hear me speak;
 No human dwelling ever give me food,
 Or sleep, or rest: but, over waste and wild,
 In search of nothing, that this earth can give,
 But expiation, will I wander on—
 A Man by pain and thought compelled to live,
 Yet loathing life—till anger is appeased
 In Heaven, and Mercy gives me leave to die.

LYRICAL BALLADS

In 1798 Biggs and Cottle of Bristol printed *Lyrical Ballads*, a single volume without authors' names. It was intended to be anonymous but it included *Lewti, or the Circassian Love Chant* which was known to be by Coleridge. The table of contents and *Lewti* were withdrawn and Coleridge's *The Nightingale* substituted, in a new impression which has the imprint *Bristol. Printed by Biggs and Cottle. For T. N. Longman, Paternoster Row, London, 1798.* In the same year, Cottle sold the work to Arch and it was re-issued as *Lyrical Ballads. With a Few Other Poems. London: Printed for J. and A. Arch, Gracechurch Street, 1798.* Two years later *Lyrical Ballads, with Other Poems* appeared in two volumes with the imprint: *London: Printed for T. N. Longman and O. Rees, Paternoster-Row, By Biggs and Co., Bristol, 1800.* The first of these volumes is described as "Second Edition" but the second volume has no note of the edition. Coleridge's poems have been removed, and each volume is now rightly described as "By W. Wordsworth." In 1802 it appeared as *Lyrical Ballads, With Pastoral and other Poems. . . . By W. Wordsworth. . . . Vol. 1. Third Edition. [Vol. II. Second Edition.]* In 1805 the edition of 1802 was reprinted but on this occasion each volume was described as "Fourth Edition."

The present selection of poems is given in the text of 1800, and is arranged in the order of that edition, with the following exceptions: three of the Poems Written in Youth have been placed above under that heading; the "Lucy" poems are gathered into one group, though "I travell'd among unknown Men" was not published until 1807 (it had been intended for the 1802 edition of *Lyrical Ballads* but was not printed there).

The *Prefaces* and other critical matter concerning *Lyrical Ballads* will be found under the general heading of Criticism on pp. 219 ff.

LYRICAL BALLADS

Expostulation and Reply

“**W**HY, William, on that old grey stone,
Thus for the length of half a day,
Why, William, sit you thus alone,
And dream your time away?

“Where are your books? that light bequeath’d
To beings else forlorn and blind!
Up! Up! and drink the spirit breath’d
From dead men to their kind.

“You look round on your mother earth,
As if she for no purpose bore you;
As if you were her first-born birth,
And none had lived before you!”

One morning thus, by Esthwaite lake,
When life was sweet, I knew not why,
To me my good friend Matthew spake,
And thus I made reply.

“The eye it cannot chuse but see,
We cannot bid the ear be still;
Our bodies feel, where’er they be,
Against, or with our will.

“Nor less I deem that there are powers
Which of themselves our minds impress,
That we can feed this mind of ours
In a wise passiveness.

“Think you, mid all this mighty sum
Of things for ever speaking,
That nothing of itself will come,
But we must still be seeking?

“—Then ask not wherefore, here, alone,
Conversing as I may,
I sit upon this old grey stone,
And dream my time away.”

The Tables Turned

AN EVENING SCENE, ON THE SAME SUBJECT

UP! up! my friend, and clear your looks,
Why all this toil and trouble?
Up! up! my friend, and quit your books,
Or surely you'll grow double.

The sun, above the mountain's head,
A freshening lustre mellow
Through all the long green fields has spread,
His first sweet evening yellow.

Books! 'tis a dull and endless strife,
Come, hear the woodland linnet,
How sweet his music; on my life
There's more of wisdom in it.

And hark! how blithe the throstle sings!
And he is no mean preacher;
Come forth into the light of things,
Let Nature be your teacher.

She has a world of ready wealth,
Our minds and hearts to bless—
Spontaneous wisdom breathed by health,
Truth breathed by cheerfulness.

One impulse from a vernal wood
May teach you more of man,
Of moral evil and of good,
Than all the sages can.

Sweet is the lore which nature brings;
Our meddling intellect
Mishapes the beauteous forms of things;
—We murder to dissect.

Enough of science and of art;
Close up these barren leaves;
Come forth, and bring with you a heart
That watches and receives.

Animal Tranquillity and Decay

A SKETCH

THE little hedge-row birds
That peck along the road, regard him not.
He travels on, and in his face, his step,
His gait, is one expression; every limb,
His look and bending figure, all bespeak
A man who does not move with pain, but moves
With thought—He is insensibly subdued
To settled quiet: he is one by whom
All effort seems forgotten, one to whom
Long patience has such mild composure given,
That patience now doth seem a thing, of which
He hath no need. He is by nature led
To peace so perfect, that the young behold
With envy, what the old man hardly feels.
—I asked him whither he was bound, and what
The object of his journey; he replied
That he was going many miles to take
A last leave of his son, a mariner,
Who from a sea-fight had been brought to Falmouth,
And there was lying in an hospital.

*The Complaint
of a Forsaken Indian Woman*

When a Northern Indian, from sickness, is unable to continue his journey with his companions, he is left behind, covered over with Deer-skins, and is supplied with water, food, and fuel if the situation of the place will afford it. He is informed of the track which his companions intend to pursue, and if he is unable to follow, or overtake them, he perishes alone in the Desert; unless he should have the good fortune to fall in with some other Tribes of Indians. It is unnecessary to add that the females are equally, or still more, exposed to the same fate. See that very interesting work, Hearne's "Journey from Hudson's Bay to the Northern Ocean." In the high Northern Latitudes, as the same writer informs us, when the Northern Lights vary their position in the air, they make a rustling and a crackling noise. This circumstance is alluded to in the first stanza of the following poem.

BEFORE I see another day,
Oh let my body die away!
In sleep I heard the northern gleams;
The stars they were among my dreams;
In sleep did I behold the skies,
I saw the cracking flashes drive;
And yet they are upon my eyes,
And yet I am alive.
Before I see another day,
Oh let my body die away!

My fire is dead: it knew no pain;
Yet is it dead, and I remain.
All stiff with ice the ashes lie;
And they are dead, and I will die.
When I was well, I wished to live,
For clothes, for warmth, for food, and fire;
But they to me no joy can give,
No pleasure now, and no desire.
Then here contented will I lie;
Alone I cannot fear to die.

Alas! you might have dragged me on
Another day, a single one!
Too soon despair o'er me prevailed;

Too soon my heartless spirit failed;
 When you were gone my limbs were stronger,
 And Oh how grievously I rue,
 That, afterwards, a little longer,
 My friends, I did not follow you!
 For strong and without pain I lay,
 My friends, when you were gone away.

My child! they gave thee to another,
 A woman who was not thy mother.
 When from my arms my babe they took,
 On me how strangely did he look!
 Through his whole body something ran,
 A most strange something did I see;
 —As if he strove to be a man,
 That he might pull the sledge for me.
 And then he stretched his arms, how wild!
 Oh mercy! like a little child.

My little joy! my little pride!
 In two days more I must have died.
 Then do not weep and grieve for me;
 I feel I must have died with thee.
 O wind that o'er my head art flying,
 The way my friends their course did bend,
 I should not feel the pain of dying,
 Could I with thee a message send.
 Too soon, my friends, you went away;
 For I had many things to say.

I'll follow you across the snow,
 You travel heavily and slow:
 In spite of all my weary pain,
 I'll look upon your tents again.
 My fire is dead, and snowy white
 The water which beside it stood;
 The wolf has come to me to-night,
 And he has stolen away my food.
 For ever left alone am I,
 Then wherefore should I fear to die?

My journey will be shortly run,
 I shall not see another sun,
 I cannot lift my limbs to know
 If they have any life or no.
 My poor forsaken child! if I
 For once could have thee close to me,
 With happy heart I then should die,
 And my last thought would happy be.
 I feel my body die away,
 I shall not see another day.

The Thorn

I

THERE is a thorn; it looks so old,
 In truth you'd find it hard to say,
 How it could ever have been young,
 It looks so old and grey.
 Not higher than a two years' child
 It stands erect this aged thorn;
 No leaves it has, no prickly points;
 It is a mass of knotted joints,
 A wretched thing forlorn.
 It stands erect, and like a stone
 With lichens it is overgrown.

II

Like rock or stone, it is o'ergrown,
 With lichens to the very top,
 And hung with heavy tufts of moss,
 A melancholy crop:
 Up from the earth these mosses creep,
 And this poor thorn they clasp it round
 So close, you'd say that they were bent
 With plain and manifest intent,
 To drag it to the ground;
 And all had join'd in one endeavour
 To bury this poor thorn for ever.

III

High on a mountain's highest ridge,
 Where oft the stormy winter gale
 Cuts like a scythe, while through the clouds
 It sweeps from vale to vale;
 Not five yards from the mountain-path,
 This thorn you on your left espy;
 And to the left, three yards beyond,
 You see a little muddy pond
 Of water, never dry;
 I've measured it from side to side:
 'Tis three feet long, and two feet wide.

IV

And close beside this aged thorn,
 There is a fresh and lovely sight,
 A beauteous heap, a hill of moss,
 Just half a foot in height.
 All lovely colours there you see,
 All colours that were ever seen,
 And mossy network too is there,
 As if by hand of lady fair
 The work had woven been,
 And cups, the darlings of the eye,
 So deep is their vermillion dye.

V

Ah me! what lovely tints are there!
 Of olive green and scarlet bright,
 In spikes, in branches, and in stars,
 Green, red, and pearly white.
 This heap of earth o'ergrown with moss,
 Which close beside the thorn you see,
 So fresh in all its beauteous dyes,
 Is like an infant's grave in size
 As like as like can be:
 But never, never any where,
 An infant's grave was half so fair.

VI

Now would you see this aged thorn,
 This pond and beauteous hill of moss,

You must take care and chuse your time
The mountain when to cross.
For oft there sits, between the heap
That's like an infant's grave in size
And that same pond of which I spoke,
A woman in a scarlet cloak,
And to herself she cries,
"Oh misery! oh misery!
Oh woe is me! oh misery!"

VII

At all times of the day and night
This wretched woman thither goes,
And she is known to every star,
And every wind that blows;
And there beside the thorn she sits
When the blue day-light's in the skies,
And when the whirlwind's on the hill,
Or frosty air is keen and still,
And to herself she cries,
"Oh misery! oh misery!
Oh woe is me! oh misery!"

VIII

"Now wherefore thus, by day and night,
In rain, in tempest, and in snow
Thus to the dreary mountain-top
Does this poor woman go?
And why sits she beside the thorn
When the blue day-light's in the sky,
Or when the whirlwind's on the hill,
Or frosty air is keen and still,
And wherefore does she cry?—
O wherefore? wherefore? tell me why
Does she repeat that doleful cry?"

IX

I cannot tell; I wish I could;
For the true reason no one knows,
But if you'd gladly view the spot,
The spot to which she goes;

The heap that's like an infant's grave,
 The pond—and thorn, so old and grey,
 Pass by her door—tis seldom shut—
 And if you see her in her hut,
 Then to the spot away!—
 I never heard of such as dare
 Approach the spot when she is there.

X

“But wherefore to the mountain-top
 Can this unhappy woman go,
 Whatever star is in the skies,
 Whatever wind may blow?”
 Nay rack your brain—'tis all in vain,
 I'll tell you every thing I know;
 But to the thorn and to the pond
 Which is a little step beyond,
 I wish that you could go:
 Perhaps when you are at the place
 You something of her tale may trace.

XI

I'll give you the best help I can:
 Before you up the mountain go,
 Up to the dreary mountain-top,
 I'll tell you all I know.
 'Tis now some two and twenty years,
 Since she (her name is Martha Ray)
 Gave with a maiden's true good will
 Her company to Stephen Hill;
 And she was blithe and gay,
 And she was happy, happy still
 Whene'er she thought of Stephen Hill.

XII

And they had fix'd the wedding-day,
 The morning that must wed them both;
 But Stephen to another maid
 Had sworn another oath;
 And with this other maid to church
 Unthinking Stephen went—

Poor Martha! on that woful day
A cruel, cruel fire, they say,
Into her bones was sent:
It dried her body like a cinder,
And almost turn'd her brain to tinder.

XIII

"They say, full six months after this,
While yet the summer leaves were green,
She to the mountain-top would go,
And there was often seen.
'Tis said, a child was in her womb,
As now to any eye was plain;
She was with child, and she was mad,
Yet often was she sober sad
From her exceeding pain.
Oh me, ten thousand times I'd rather,
That he had died, that cruel father!

XIV

Sad case for such a brain to hold
Communion with a stirring child!
Sad case, as you may think, for one
Who had a brain so wild!
Last Christmas when we talked of this,
Old Farmer Simpson did maintain,
That in her womb the infant wrought
About its mother's heart, and brought
Her senses back again:
And when at last her time drew near,
Her looks were calm, her senses clear.

XV

No more I know, I wish I did,
And I would tell it all to you;
For what became of this poor child
There's none that ever knew:
And if a child was born or no,
There's no one that could ever tell
And if 'twas born alive or dead,
There's no one knows, as I have said,

But some remember well,
That Martha Ray about this time
Would up the mountain often climb.

XVI

And all that winter, when at night
The wind blew from the mountain-peak,
'Twas worth your while, though in the dark,
The church-yard path to seek:
For many a time and oft were heard
Cries coming from the mountain-head,
Some plainly living voices were,
And others, I've heard many swear,
Were voices of the dead:
I cannot think, whate'er they say,
They had to do with Martha Ray.

XVII

But that she goes to this old thorn,
The thorn which I've described to you,
And there sits in a scarlet cloak,
I will be sworn is true.
For one day with my telescope,
To view the ocean wide and bright,
When to this country first I came,
Ere I had heard of Martha's name,
I climbed the mountain's height:
A storm came on, and I could see
No object higher than my knee.

XVIII

'Twas mist and rain, and storm and rain,
No screen, no fence could I discover,
And then the wind! in faith, it was
A wind full ten times over.
I looked around, I thought I saw
A jutting crag, and off I ran,
Head-foremost, through the driving rain,
The shelter of the crag to gain,
And, as I am a man,
Instead of jutting crag, I found
A woman seated on the ground.

XIX

I did not speak—I saw her face,
In truth it was enough for me;
I turned about and heard her cry,
“O misery! O misery!”
And there she sits, until the moon
Through half the clear blue sky will go,
And when the little breezes make
The waters of the pond to shake,
As all the country know,
She shudders, and you hear her cry,
“Oh misery! oh misery!”

XX

“But what’s the thorn? and what’s the pond?
And what’s the hill of moss to her?
And what’s the creeping breeze that comes
The little pond to stir?”
I cannot tell; but some will say
She hanged her baby on the tree,
Some say she drowned it in the pond,
Which is a little step beyond,
But all and each agree,
The little babe was buried there,
Beneath that hill of moss so fair.

XXI

I’ve heard, the moss is spotted red
With drops of that poor infant’s blood;
But kill a new-born infant thus!
I do not think she could.
Some say, if to the pond you go,
And fix on it a steady view,
The shadow of a babe you trace,
A baby and a baby’s face,
And that it looks at you;
Whene’er you look on it, ’tis plain
The baby looks at you again.

XXII

And some had sworn an oath that she
Should be to public justice brought;

And for the little infant's bones
 With spades they would have sought.
 But then the beauteous hill of moss
 Before their eyes began to stir;
 And for full fifty yards around,
 The grass it shook upon the ground;
 Yet all do still aver
 The little babe lies buried there,
 Beneath that hill of moss so fair.

XXIII

I cannot tell how this may be,
 But plain it is, the thorn is bound
 With heavy tufts of moss, that strive
 To drag it to the ground.
 And this I know, full many a time,
 When she was on the mountain high,
 By day, and in the silent night,
 When all the stars shone clear and bright,
 That I have heard her cry,
 "Oh misery! oh misery!
 Oh woe is me! oh misery!"

We are Seven

A SIMPLE child, dear brother Jim,
 That lightly draws its breath,
 And feels its life in every limb,
 What should it know of death?

I met a little cottage girl,
 She was eight years old, she said;
 Her hair was thick with many a curl
 That cluster'd round her head.

She had a rustic, woodland air,
 And she was wildly clad;
 Her eyes were fair, and very fair,
 —Her beauty made me glad.

“Sisters and brothers, little maid,
How many may you be?”
“How many? seven in all,” she said,
And wondering looked at me.

“And where are they, I pray you tell?”
She answered, “Seven are we,
And two of us at Conway dwell,
And two are gone to sea.

“Two of us in the church-yard lie,
My sister and my brother,
And in the church-yard cottage, I
Dwell near them with my mother.”

“You say that two at Conway dwell,
And two are gone to sea,
Yet you are seven; I pray you tell
Sweet Maid, how this may be?”

Then did the little Maid reply,
“Seven boys and girls are we;
Two of us in the church-yard lie,
Beneath the church-yard tree.”

“You run about, my little maid,
Your limbs they are alive;
If two are in the church-yard laid,
Then ye are only five.”

“Their graves are green, they may be seen,”
The little Maid replied,
“Twelve steps or more from my mother’s door,
And they are side by side.

“My stockings there I often knit,
My ’kerchief there I hem;
And there upon the ground I sit—
And sing a song to them.

“And often after sunset, Sir,
When it is light and fair,
I take my little porringer,
And eat my supper there.

“The first that died was sister Jane;
In bed she moaning lay,
Till God released her of her pain,
And then she went away.

“So in the church-yard she was laid,
And all the summer dry,
Together round her grave we played,
My brother John and I.

“And when the ground was white with snow,
And I could run and slide,
My brother John was forced to go,
And he lies by her side.”

“How many are you, then,” said I,
“If they two are in Heaven?”
The little Maiden did reply,
“O Master! we are seven.”

“But they are dead; those two are dead!
Their spirits are in heaven!”
’Twas throwing words away; for still
The little Maid would have her will,
And said, “Nay, we are seven!”

Anecdote for Fathers

SHEWING HOW THE PRACTICE OF LYING MAY BE TAUGHT

I HAVE a boy of five years old,
His face is fair and fresh to see;
His limbs are cast in beauty’s mould,
And dearly he loves me.

LYRICAL BALLADS

One morn we strolled on our dry walk,
Our quiet house all full in view,
And held such intermitted talk
As we are wont to do.

My thoughts on former pleasures ran;
I thought of Kilve's delightful shore,
Our pleasant home, when Spring began,
A long, long year before.

A day it was when I could bear
To think, and think, and think again;
With so much happiness to spare,
I could not feel a pain.

My boy was by my side, so slim
And graceful in his rustic dress!
And oftentimes I talked to him
In very idleness.

The young lambs ran a pretty race;
The morning sun shone bright and warm;
"Kilve," said I, "was a pleasant place,
And so is Liswyn farm."

"My little boy, which like you more,"
I said and took him by the arm—
"Our home by Kilve's delightful shore,
Or here at Liswyn farm?"

"And tell me, had you rather be,"
I said and held him by the arm,
"At Kilve's smooth shore by the green sea,
Or here at Liswyn farm?"

In careless mood he looked at me,
While still I held him by the arm,
And said, "At Kilve I'd rather be
Than here at Liswyn farm."

“Now, little Edward, say why so;
My little Edward, tell me why;”
“I cannot tell, I do not know.”
“Why this is strange,” said I.

“For, here are woods and green hills warm:
There surely must some reason be
Why you would change sweet Liswyn farm
For Kilve by the green sea.”

At this, my boy hung down his head,
He blush'd with shame, nor made reply;
And five times to the child I said,
“Why, Edward, tell me, why?”

His head he raised—there was in sight,
It caught his eye, he saw it plain—
Upon the house-top, glittering bright,
A broad and gilded vane.

Then did the boy his tongue unlock,
And thus to me he made reply;
“At Kilve there was no weather-cock,
And that's the reason why.”

Oh dearest, dearest boy! my heart
For better lore would seldom yearn
Could I but teach the hundredth part
Of what from thee I learn.

[*To my Sister*]

LINES WRITTEN AT A SMALL DISTANCE FROM MY HOUSE, AND SENT BY
MY LITTLE BOY TO THE PERSON TO WHOM THEY ARE ADDRESSED

IT is the first mild day of March:
Each minute sweeter than before,
The red-breast sings from the tall larch
That stands beside our door.

There is a blessing in the air,
Which seems a sense of joy to yield
To the bare trees, and mountains bare,
And grass in the green field.

My Sister! ('tis a wish of mine)
Now that our morning meal is done,
Make haste, your morning task resign;
Come forth and feel the sun.

Edward will come with you, and pray,
Put on with speed your woodland dress,
And bring no book, for this one day
We'll give to idleness.

No joyless forms shall regulate
Our living Calendar:
We from to-day, my friend, will date
The opening of the year.

Love, now an universal birth,
From heart to heart is stealing,
From earth to man, from man to earth,
—It is the hour of feeling.

One moment now may give us more
Than fifty years of reason;
Our minds shall drink at every pore
The spirit of the season.

Some silent laws our hearts will make,
Which they shall long obey:
We for the year to come may take
Our temper from to-day.

And from the blessed power that rolls
About, below, above,
We'll frame the measure of our souls,
They shall be tuned to love.

Then come, my sister! come, I pray,
With speed put on your woodland dress,
And bring no book; for this one day
We'll give to idleness.

The Female Vagrant

By Derwent's side my Father's cottage stood,
 (The Woman thus her artless story told)
 One field, a flock, and what the neighbouring flood
 Supplied, to him were more than mines of gold.
 Light was my sleep; my days in transport roll'd:
 With thoughtless joy I stretch'd along the shore
 My father's nets, or from the mountain fold
 Saw on the distant lake his twinkling oar
 Or watch'd his lazy boat still less'ning more and more.

My father was a good and pious man,
 An honest man by honest parents bred,
 And I believe that, soon as I began
 To lisp, he made me kneel beside my bed,
 And in his hearing there my prayers I said:
 And afterwards, by my good father taught,
 I read, and loved the books in which I read;
 For books in every neighbouring house I sought,
 And nothing to my mind a sweeter pleasure brought.

Can I forget what charms did once adorn
 My garden, stored with pease, and mint, and thyme,
 And rose and lilly for the sabbath morn?
 The sabbath bells, and their delightful chime;
 The gambols and wild freaks at shearing time;
 My hen's rich nest through long grass scarce espied;
 The cowslip-gathering at May's dewy prime;
 The swans, that, when I sought the water-side,
 From far to meet me came, spreading their snowy pride.

The staff I yet remember which upbore
 The bending body of my active sire;
 His seat beneath the honeyed sycamore
 When the bees hummed, and chair by winter fire;
 When market-morning came, the neat attire
 With which, though bent on haste, myself I deck'd;
 My watchful dog, whose starts of furious ire,

When stranger passed, so often I have check'd;
The red-breast known for years, which at my casement
peck'd.

The suns of twenty summers danced along,—
Ah! little marked, how fast they rolled away:
Then rose a stately hall our woods among,
And cottage after cottage owned its sway.
No joy to see a neighbouring house, or stray
Through pastures not his own, the master took;
My Father dared his greedy wish gainsay;
He loved his old hereditary nook,
And ill could I the thought of such sad parting brook.

But when he had refused the proffered gold,
To cruel injuries he became a prey,
Sore traversed in whate'er he bought and sold:
His troubles grew upon him day by day,
Till all his substance fell into decay.
His little range of water was denied;¹
All but the bed where his old body lay,
All, all was seized, and weeping, side by side,
We sought a home where we uninjured might abide.

Can I forget that miserable hour,
When from the last hill-top, my sire surveyed,
Peering above the trees, the steeple tower
That on his marriage-day sweet music made?
Till then he hoped his bones might there be laid,
Close by my mother in their native bowers:
Bidding me trust in God, he stood and prayed,—
I could not pray:—through tears that fell in showers,
Glimmer'd our dear-loved home, alas! no longer ours!

There was a youth whom I had loved so long,
That when I loved him not I cannot say.
'Mid the green mountains many and many a song
We two had sung, like gladsome birds in May.

¹ Several of the Lakes in the north of England are let out to different Fishermen, in parcels marked out by imaginary lines drawn from rock to rock.

When we began to tire of childish play
 We seemed still more and more to prize each other;
 We talked of marriage and our marriage day;
 And I in truth did love him like a brother,
 For never could I hope to meet with such another.

His father said, that to a distant town
 He must repair, to ply the artist's trade.
 What tears of bitter grief till then unknown?
 What tender vows our last sad kiss delayed!
 To him we turned:—we had no other aid.
 Like one revived, upon his neck I wept,
 And her whom he had loved in joy, he said
 He well could love in grief: his faith he kept;
 And in a quiet home once more my father slept.

Four years each day with daily bread was blest,
 By constant toil and constant prayer supplied.
 Three lovely infants lay upon my breast;
 And often, viewing their sweet smiles, I sighed,
 And knew not why. My happy father died
 When sad distress reduced the children's meal:
 Thrice happy! that from him the grave did hide
 The empty loom, cold hearth, and silent wheel,
 And tears that flowed for ills which patience could
 not heal.

'Twas a hard change, an evil time was come;
 We had no hope, and no relief could gain.
 But soon, with proud parade, the noisy drum
 Beat round, to sweep the streets of want and pain.
 My husband's arms now only served to strain
 Me and his children hungering in his view:
 In such dismay my prayers and tears were vain:
 To join those miserable men he flew;
 And now to the sea-coast, with numbers more, we drew.

There foul neglect for months and months we bore,
 Nor yet the crowded fleet its anchor stirred.
 Green fields before us and our native shore,
 By fever, from polluted air incurred,

LYRICAL BALLADS

Ravage was made, for which no knell was heard.
Fondly we wished, and wished away, nor knew,
'Mid that long sickness, and those hopes deferr'd,
That happier days we never more must view:
The parting signal streamed, at last the land withdrew.

But from delay the summer calms were past.
On as we drove, the equinoctial deep
Ran mountains-high before the howling blast.
We gazed with terror on the gloomy sleep
Of them that perished in the whirlwind's sweep,
Untaught that soon such anguish must ensue,
Our hopes such harvest of affliction reap,
That we the mercy of the waves should rue.
We reached the western world, a poor, devoted crew.

Oh! dreadful price of being to resign
All that is dear *in* being! better far
In Want's most lonely cave till death to pine,
Unseen, unheard, unwatched by any star;
Or in the streets and walks where proud men are,
Better our dying bodies to obtrude,
Than dog-like, wading at the heels of war,
Protract a curst existence, with the brood
That lap (their very nourishment!) their brother's
blood.

The pains and plagues that on our heads came down,
Disease and famine, agony and fear,
In wood or wilderness, in camp or town,
It would thy brain unsettle even to hear.
All perished—all, in one remorseless year,
Husband and children! one by one, by sword
And ravenous plague, all perished: every tear
Dried up, despairing, desolate, on board
A British ship I waked, as from a trance restored,

Peaceful as some immeasurable plain
By the first beams of dawning light impress'd
In the calm sunshine slept the glittering main.
The very ocean has its hour of rest,

That comes not to the human mourner's breast.
 Remote from man, and storms of mortal care,
 A heavenly silence did the waves invest:
 I looked and looked along the silent air,
 Until it seemed to bring a joy to my despair.

Ah! how unlike those late terrific sleeps!
 And groans, that rage of racking famine spoke:
 The unburied dead that lay in festering heaps!
 The breathing pestilence that rose like smoke!
 The shriek that from the distant battle broke!
 The mine's dire earthquake, and the pallid host
 Driven by the bomb's incessant thunder-stroke
 To loathsome vaults, where heart-sick anguish toss'd,
 Hope died, and fear itself in agony was lost!

Yet does that burst of woe congeal my frame,
 When the dark streets appeared to heave and gape,
 While like a sea the storming army came,
 And Fire from hell reared his gigantic shape,
 And Murder, by the ghastly gleam, and Rape
 Seized their joint prey, the mother and the child!
 But from these crazing thoughts my brain, escape!
 —For weeks the balmy air breathed soft and mild,
 And on the gliding vessel Heaven and Ocean smiled.

Some mighty gulph of separation past,
 I seemed transported to another world:—
 A thought resigned with pain, when from the mast
 The impatient mariner the sail unfurl'd,
 And whistling, called the wind that hardly curled
 The silent sea. From the sweet thoughts of home,
 And from all hope I was forever hurled.
 For me—farthest from earthly port to roam
 Was best, could I but shun the spot where man might
 come.

And oft, robb'd of my perfect mind, I thought
 At last my feet a resting-place had found:
 Here will I weep in peace, (so fancy wrought,)
 Roaming the illimitable waters round;

Here watch, of every human friend disowned,
All day, my ready tomb the ocean-flood—
To break my dream the vessel reached its bound:
And homeless near a thousand homes I stood,
And near a thousand tables pined, and wanted food.

By grief enfeebled was I turned adrift,
Helpless as a sailor cast on desert rock;
Nor morsel to my mouth that day did lift,
Nor dared my hand at any door to knock.
I lay, where with his drowsy mates, the cock
From the cross timber of an out-house hung;
How dismal tolled, that night, the city clock!
At morn my sick heart hunger scarcely stung,
Nor to the beggar's language could I frame my tongue.

So passed another day, and so the third:
Then did I try, in vain, the crowd's resort,
In deep despair by frightful wishes stirr'd,
Near the sea-side I reached a ruined fort:
There, pains which nature could no more support,
With blindness linked, did on my vitals fall;
Dizzy my brain, with interruption short
Of hideous sense; I sunk, nor step could crawl,
And thence was borne away to neighbouring hospital.

Recovery came with food: but still, my brain
Was weak, nor of the past had memory.
I heard my neighbours, in their beds, complain
Of many things which never troubled me;
Of feet still bustling round with busy glee,
Of looks where common kindness had no part,
Of service done with careless cruelty,
Fretting the fever round the languid heart,
And groans, which, as they said, would make a dead
man start.

These things just served to stir the torpid sense,
Nor pain nor pity in my bosom raised.
Memory, though slow, returned with strength; and thence
Dismissed, again on open day I gazed,

At houses, men, and common light, amazed.
 The lanes I sought, and as the sun retired,
 Came, where beneath the trees a faggot blazed;
 The wild brood saw me weep, my fate enquired,
 And gave me food, and rest, more welcome, more desired.

My heart is touched to think that men like these,
 The rude earth's tenants, were my first relief:
 How kindly did they paint their vagrant ease!
 And their long holiday that feared not grief,
 For all belonged to all, and each was chief.
 No plough their sinews strained; on grating road
 No wain they drove, and yet, the yellow sheaf
 In every vale for their delight was stowed:
 For them, in nature's meads, the milky udder flowed.

Semblance, with straw and panniered ass, they made
 Of potters wandering on from door to door:
 But life of happier sort to me pourtrayed,
 And other joys my fancy to allure;
 The bag-pipe dinning on the midnight moor
 In barn uplighted, and companions boon
 Well met from far with revelry secure,
 In depth of forest glade, when jocund June
 Rolled fast along the sky his warm and genial moon.

But ill it suited me, in journey dark
 O'er moor and mountain, midnight theft to hatch;
 To charm the surly house-dog's faithful bark,
 Or hang on tiptoe at the lifted latch;
 The gloomy lantern, and the dim blue match,
 The black disguise, the warning whistle shrill,
 And ear still busy on its nightly watch,
 Were not for me, brought up in nothing ill;
 Besides, on griefs so fresh my thoughts were brooding still.

What could I do, unaided and unblest?
 Poor Father! gone was every friend of thine:
 And kindred of dead husband are at best
 Small help, and, after marriage such as mine,

With little kindness would to me incline.
 Ill was I then for toil or service fit:
 With tears whose course no effort could confine,
 By high-way side forgetful would I sit
 Whole hours, my idle arms in moping sorrow knit.

I lived upon the mercy of the fields,
 And oft of cruelty the sky accused;
 On hazard, or what general bounty yields,
 Now coldly given, now utterly refused.
 The fields I for my bed have often used:
 But, what afflicts my peace with keenest ruth
 Is, that I have my inner self abused,
 Foregone the home delight of constant truth,
 And clear and open soul, so prized in fearless youth.

Three years a wanderer, often have I view'd,
 In tears, the sun towards that country tend
 Where my poor heart lost all its fortitude:
 And now across this moor my steps I bend—
 Oh! tell me whither—for no earthly friend
 Have I.—She ceased, and weeping turned away,
 As if because her tale was at an end
 She wept;—because she had no more to say
 Of that perpetual weight which on her spirit lay.

Lines

WRITTEN IN EARLY SPRING

I HEARD a thousand blended notes,
 While in a grove I sate reclined,
 In that sweet mood when pleasant thoughts
 Bring sad thoughts to the mind.

To her fair works did nature link
 The human soul that through me ran;
 And much it griev'd my heart to think
 What man has made of man.

Through primrose tufts, in that sweet bower,
The periwinkle trail'd its wreathes:
And 'tis my faith that every flower
Enjoys the air it breathes.

The birds around me hopp'd and play'd;
Their thoughts I cannot measure,
But the least motion which they made
It seem'd a thrill of pleasure.

The budding twigs spread out their fan,
To catch the breezy air;
And I must think, do all I can,
That there was pleasure there.

If I these thoughts may not prevent,
If such be of my creed the plan,
Have I not reason to lament
What man has made of man?

The Mad Mother

HER eyes are wild, her head is bare,
The sun has burnt her coal-black hair,
Her eye-brows have a rusty stain,
And she came far from over the main.
She has a baby on her arm,
Or else she were alone;
And underneath the hay-stack warm,
And on the green-wood stone,
She talked and sung the woods among;
And it was in the English tongue.

“Sweet babe! they say that I am mad,
But nay, my heart is far too glad;
And I am happy when I sing
Full many a sad and doleful thing:
Then, lovely baby, do not fear!
I pray thee have no fear of me,

LYRICAL BALLADS

But, safe as in a cradle, here
My lovely baby! thou shalt be,
To thee I know too much I owe;
I cannot work thee any woe.

“A fire was once within my brain;
And in my head a dull, dull pain;
And fiendish faces, one, two, three,
Hung at my breasts, and pulled at me.
But then there came a sight of joy;
It came at once to do me good;
I waked, and saw my little boy,
My little boy of flesh and blood;
Oh joy for me that sight to see!
For he was here, and only he.

“Suck, little babe, oh suck again!
It cools my blood; it cools my brain;
Thy lips I feel them, baby! they
Draw from my heart the pain away.
Oh! press me with thy little hand;
It loosens something at my chest;
About that tight and deadly band
I feel thy little fingers press'd.
The breeze I see is in the tree;
It comes to cool my babe and me.

“Oh! love me, love me, little boy!
Thou art thy mother's only joy;
And do not dread the waves below,
When o'er the sea-rock's edge we go;
The high crag cannot work me harm,
Nor leaping torrents when they howl;
The babe I carry on my arm,
He saves for me my precious soul;
Then happy lie; for blest am I;
Without me my sweet babe would die.

“Then do not fear, my boy! for thee
Bold as a lion I will be;
And I will always be thy guide,

Through hollow snows and rivers wide.
 I'll build an Indian bower; I know
 The leaves that make the softest bed:
 And if from me thou wilt not go,
 But still be true till I am dead,
 My pretty thing! then thou shalt sing
 As merry as the birds in spring.

"Thy father cares not for my breast,
 'Tis thine, sweet baby, there to rest:
 'Tis all thine own! and if its hue
 Be changed, that was so fair to view,
 'Tis fair enough for thee, my dove!
 My beauty, little child, is flown;
 But thou wilt live with me in love,
 And what if my poor cheek be brown?
 'Tis well for me thou canst not see
 How pale and wan it else would be.

"Dread not their taunts, my little life!
 I am thy father's wedded wife;
 And underneath the spreading tree
 We two will live in honesty.
 If his sweet boy he could forsake,
 With me he never would have stay'd:
 From him no harm my babe can take,
 But he, poor man! is wretched made,
 And every day we two will pray
 For him that's gone and far away.

"I'll teach my boy the sweetest things;
 I'll teach him how the owlet sings.
 My little babe! thy lips are still,
 And thou hast almost suck'd thy fill.
 —Where art thou gone, my own dear child?
 What wicked looks are those I see?
 Alas! alas! that look so wild,
 It never, never came from me:
 If thou art mad, my pretty lad,
 Then I must be for ever sad.

“Oh! smile on me, my little lamb!
 For I thy own dear mother am.
 My love for thee has well been tried:
 I’ve sought thy father far and wide.
 I know the poisons of the shade,
 I know the earth-nuts fit for food;
 Then, pretty dear, be not afraid;
 We’ll find thy father in the wood.
 Now laugh and be gay, to the woods away!
 And there, my babe, we’ll live for aye.”

Lines

WRITTEN A FEW MILES ABOVE TINTERN ABBEY,
 ON REVISITING THE BANKS OF THE WYE DURING A TOUR.
 JULY 13, 1798

FIVE years have passed; five summers, with the length
 Of five long winters! and again I hear
 These waters, rolling from their mountain-springs
 With a sweet inland murmur.¹—Once again
 Do I behold these steep and lofty cliffs,
 Which on a wild secluded scene impress
 Thoughts of more deep seclusion; and connect
 The landscape with the quiet of the sky.
 The day is come when I again repose
 Here, under this dark sycamore, and view
 These plots of cottage-ground, these orchard-tufts,
 Which, at this season, with their unripe fruits,
 Among the woods and copses lose themselves,
 Nor, with their green and simple hue, disturb
 The wild green landscape. Once again I see
 These hedge-rows, hardly hedge-rows, little lines
 Of sportive wood run wild; these pastoral farms
 Green to the very door; and wreathes of smoke
 Sent up, in silence, from among the trees,
 With some uncertain notice, as might seem,
 Of vagrant dwellers in the houseless woods,
 Or of some hermit’s cave, where by his fire

¹ The river is not affected by the tides a few miles above Tintern.

The hermit sits alone.

Though absent long,
 These forms of beauty have not been to me,
 As is a landscape to a blind man's eye:
 But oft, in lonely rooms, and mid the din
 Of towns and cities, I have owed to them,
 In hours of weariness, sensations sweet,
 Felt in the blood, and felt along the heart,
 And passing even into my purer mind,
 With tranquil restoration:—feelings too
 Of unremembered pleasure: such, perhaps,
 As may have had no trivial influence
 On that best portion of a good man's life;
 His little, nameless, unremembered acts
 Of kindness and of love. Nor less, I trust,
 To them I may have owed another gift,
 Of aspect more sublime; that blessed mood,
 In which the burthen of the mystery,
 In which the heavy and the weary weight
 Of all this unintelligible world
 Is lighten'd:—that serene and blessed mood,
 In which the affections gently lead us on,
 Until, the breath of this corporeal frame,
 And even the motion of our human blood
 Almost suspended, we are laid asleep
 In body, and become a living soul:
 While with an eye made quiet by the power
 Of harmony, and the deep power of joy,
 We see into the life of things.

If this
 Be but a vain belief, yet, oh! how oft,
 In darkness, and amid the many shapes
 Of joyless day-light; when the fretful stir
 Unprofitable, and the fever of the world,
 Have hung upon the beatings of my heart,
 How oft, in spirit, have I turned to thee,
 O sylvan Wye! Thou wanderer through the woods,
 How often has my spirit turned to thee!

And now, with gleams of half-extinguish'd thought,
 With many recognitions dim and faint,

And somewhat of a sad perplexity,
 The picture of the mind revives again:
 While here I stand, not only with the sense
 Of present pleasure, but with pleasing thoughts
 That in this moment there is life and food
 For future years. And so I dare to hope,
 Though changed, no doubt, from what I was, when first
 I came among these hills; when like a roe
 I bounded o'er the mountains, by the sides
 Of the deep rivers, and the lonely streams,
 Wherever nature led: more like a man
 Flying from something that he dreads, than one
 Who sought the thing he loved. For nature then
 (The coarser pleasures of my boyish days,
 And their glad animal movements all gone by,)
 To me was all in all.—I cannot paint
 What then I was. The sounding cataract
 Haunted me like a passion: the tall rock,
 The mountain, and the deep and gloomy wood,
 Their colours and their forms, were then to me
 An appetite: a feeling and a love,
 That had no need of a remoter charm,
 By thought supplied, or any interest
 Unborrowed from the eye.—That time is past,
 And all its aching joys are now no more,
 And all its dizzy raptures. Not for this
 Faint I, nor mourn nor murmur: other gifts
 Have followed, for such loss, I would believe,
 Abundant recompence. For I have learned
 To look on nature, not as in the hour
 Of thoughtless youth, but hearing oftentimes
 The still, sad music of humanity,
 Nor harsh nor grating, though of ample power
 To chasten and subdue. And I have felt
 A presence that disturbs me with the joy
 Of elevated thoughts; a sense sublime
 Of something far more deeply interfused,
 Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,
 And the round ocean, and the living air,
 And the blue sky, and in the mind of man,
 A motion and a spirit, that impels

All thinking things, all objects of all thought,
 And rolls through all things. Therefore am I still
 A lover of the meadows and the woods,
 And mountains; and of all that we behold
 From this green earth; of all the mighty world
 Of eye and ear, both what they half create,¹
 And what perceive; well pleased to recognize
 In nature and the language of the sense,
 The anchor of my purest thoughts, the nurse,
 The guide, the guardian of my heart, and soul
 Of all my moral being.

Nor, perchance,
 If I were not thus taught, should I the more
 Suffer my genial spirits to decay:
 For thou art with me, here, upon the banks
 Of this fair river; thou, my dearest Friend,
 My dear, dear Friend, and in thy voice I catch
 The language of my former heart, and read
 My former pleasures in the shooting lights
 Of thy wild eyes. Oh! yet a little while
 May I behold in thee what I was once,
 My dear, dear Sister! And this prayer I make,
 Knowing that Nature never did betray
 The heart that loved her; 'tis her privilege,
 Through all the years of this our life, to lead
 From joy to joy: for she can so inform
 The mind that is within us, so impress
 With quietness and beauty, and so feed
 With lofty thoughts, that neither evil tongues,
 Rash judgments, nor the sneers of selfish men,
 Nor greetings where no kindness is, nor all
 The dreary intercourse of daily life,
 Shall e'er prevail against us, or disturb
 Our chearful faith that all which we behold
 Is full of blessings. Therefore let the moon
 Shine on thee in thy solitary walk;
 And let the misty mountain winds be free
 To blow against thee: and in after years,

¹ This line has a close resemblance to an admirable line of Young, the exact expression of which I cannot recollect. [*Night Thoughts*: "And half-create the wondrous world they see."]]

When these wild ecstasies shall be matured
 Into a sober pleasure, when thy mind
 Shall be a mansion for all lovely forms,
 Thy memory be as a dwelling-place
 For all sweet sounds and harmonies; Oh! then,
 If solitude, or fear, or pain, or grief,
 Should be thy portion, with what healing thoughts
 Of tender joy wilt thou remember me,
 And these my exhortations! Nor perchance,
 If I should be where I no more can hear
 Thy voice, nor catch from thy wild eyes these gleams
 Of past existence, wilt thou then forget
 That on the banks of this delightful stream
 We stood together; and that I, so long
 A worshipper of Nature, hither came,
 Unwearied in that service: rather say
 With warmer love, oh! with far deeper zeal
 Of holier love. Nor wilt thou then forget,
 That after many wanderings, many years
 Of absence, these steep woods and lofty cliffs,
 And this green pastoral landscape, were to me
 More dear, both for themselves, and for thy sake.

Hart-Leap Well

Hart-Leap Well is a small spring of water, about five miles from Richmond in Yorkshire, and near the side of the road which leads from Richmond to Askrigg. Its name is derived from a remarkable chace, the memory of which is preserved by the monuments spoken of in the second Part of the following Poem, which monuments do now exist as I have there described them.

THE Knight had ridden down from Wensley moor
 With the slow motion of a summer's cloud;
 He turn'd aside towards a Vassal's door,
 And, "Bring another Horse!" he cried aloud.

"Another Horse!"—That shout the Vassal heard,
 And saddled his best steed, a comely Grey;
 Sir Walter mounted him; he was the third
 Which he had mounted on that glorious day.

Joy sparkled in the prancing Courser's eyes;
 The horse and horseman are a happy pair;
 But, though Sir Walter like a falcon flies,
 There is a doleful silence in the air.

A rout this morning left Sir Walter's Hall,
 That as they gallop'd made the echoes roar;
 But horse and man are vanish'd, one and all;
 Such race, I think, was never seen before.

Sir Walter, restless as a veering wind,
 Calls to the few tired dogs that yet remain:
 Brach, Swift and Music, noblest of their kind,
 Follow, and up the weary mountain strain.

The Knight halloo'd, he chid and cheer'd them on
 With suppliant gestures and upbraidings stern;
 But breath and eye-sight fail, and, one by one,
 The dogs are stretch'd among the mountain fern.

Where is the throng, the tumult of the chace?
 The bugles that so joyfully were blown?
 —This race it looks not like an earthly race;
 Sir Walter and the Hart are left alone.

The poor Hart toils along the mountain side;
 I will not stop to tell how far he fled,
 Nor will I mention by what death he died;
 But now the Knight beholds him lying dead.

Dismounting then, he lean'd against a thorn;
 He had no follower, dog, nor man, nor boy:
 He neither smack'd his whip, nor blew his horn,
 But gaz'd upon the spoil with silent joy.

Close to the thorn on which Sir Walter lean'd,
 Stood his dumb partner in this glorious act;
 Weak as a lamb the hour that it is yean'd,
 And foaming like a mountain cataract.

Upon his side the Hart was lying stretch'd:
His nose half-touch'd a spring beneath a hill,
And with the last deep groan his breath had fetch'd
The waters of the spring were trembling still.

And now, too happy for repose or rest,
Was never man in such a joyful case,
Sir Walter walk'd all round, north, south and west,
And gaz'd, and gaz'd upon that darling place.

And turning up the hill, it was at least
Nine roods of sheer ascent, Sir Walter found
Three several marks which with his hoofs the beast
Had left imprinted on the verdant ground.

Sir Walter wiped his face, and cried, "Till now
Such sight was never seen by living eyes:
Three leaps have borne him from this lofty brow,
Down to the very fountain where he lies.

"I'll build a Pleasure-house upon this spot,
And a small Arbour, made for rural joy;
'Twill be the traveller's shed, the pilgrim's cot,
A place of love for damsels that are coy.

"A cunning Artist will I have to frame
A bason for that fountain in the dell;
And they, who do make mention of the same,
From this day forth, shall call it Hart-leap Well.

"And gallant brute! to make thy praises known,
Another monument shall here be rais'd;
Three several pillars, each a rough hewn stone,
And planted where thy hoofs the turf have graz'd.

"And in the summer-time when days are long,
I will come hither with my paramour,
And with the dancers, and the minstrel's song,
We will make merry in that pleasant bower.

“Till the foundations of the mountains fail
 My mansion with its harbour shall endure;
 —The joy of them who till the fields of Swale,
 And them who dwell among the woods of Ure.”

Then home he went, and left the Hart, stone-dead,
 With breathless nostrils stretch'd above the spring.
 And soon the Knight perform'd what he had said,
 The fame whereof through many a land did ring.

Ere thrice the moon into her port had steer'd,
 A cup of stone receiv'd the living well;
 Three pillars of rude stone Sir Walter rear'd,
 And built a house of pleasure in the dell.

And near the fountain, flowers of stature tall
 With trailing plants and trees were intertwin'd,
 Which soon composed a little sylvan hall,
 A leafy shelter from the sun and wind.

And thither, when the summer days were long,
 Sir Walter journey'd with his paramour;
 And with the dancers and the minstrel's song
 Made merriment within that pleasant bower.

The Knight, Sir Walter, died in course of time,
 And his bones lie in his paternal vale.—
 But there is matter for a second rhyme,
 And I to this would add another tale.

PART SECOND

THE moving accident is not my trade,
 To curl the blood I have no ready arts;
 'Tis my delight, alone in summer shade,
 To pipe a simple song to thinking hearts.

As I from Hawes to Richmond did repair,
 It chanc'd that I saw standing in a dell
 Three aspens at three corners of a square,
 And one, not four yards distant, near a well.

What this imported I could ill divine,
And, pulling now the rein my horse to stop,
I saw three pillars standing in a line,
The last stone pillar on a dark hill-top.

The trees were grey, with neither arms nor head;
Half-wasted the square mound of tawny green;
So that you just might say, as then I said,
“Here in old time the hand of man has been.”

I look'd upon the hills both far and near;
More doleful place did never eye survey;
It seem'd as if the spring-time came not here,
And Nature here were willing to decay.

I stood in various thoughts and fancies lost,
When one who was in Shepherd's garb attir'd,
Came up the hollow. Him did I accost,
And what this place might be I then inquir'd.

The Shepherd stopp'd, and that same story told
Which in my former rhyme I have rehears'd.
“A jolly place,” said he, “in times of old,
But something ails it now; the spot is curs'd.

“You see these lifeless stumps of aspin wood,
Some say that they are beeches, others elms,
These were the Bower; and here a Mansion stood,
The finest palace of a hundred realms.

“The harbour does its own condition tell,
You see the stones, the fountain, and the stream;
But as to the great Lodge, you might as well
Hunt half a day for a forgotten dream.

“There's neither dog nor heifer, horse nor sheep,
Will wet his lips within that cup of stone;
And, oftentimes, when all are fast asleep,
This water doth send forth a dolorous groan.

“Some say that here a murder has been done,
And blood cries out for blood: but, for my part,
I’ve guess’d, when I’ve been sitting in the sun,
That it was all for that unhappy Hart.

“What thoughts must through the creature’s brain have
pass’d!
To this place from the stone upon the steep
Are but three bounds, and look, Sir, at this last!
O Master! it has been a cruel leap.

“For thirteen hours he ran a desperate race;
And in my simple mind we cannot tell
What cause the Hart might have to love this place,
And come and make his death-bed near the well.

“Here on the grass perhaps asleep he sank,
Lull’d by this fountain in the summer-tide;
This water was perhaps the first he drank
When he had wander’d from his mother’s side.

“In April here beneath the scented thorn
He heard the birds their morning carols sing,
And he, perhaps, for aught we know, was born
Not half a furlong from that self-same spring.

But now here’s neither grass nor pleasant shade;
The sun on drearier hollow never shone:
So will it be, as I have often said,
Till trees, and stones, and fountain all are gone.”

“Grey-headed Shepherd, thou hast spoken well;
Small difference lies between thy creed and mine;
This beast not unobserv’d by Nature fell,
His death was mourn’d by sympathy divine.

“The Being, that is in the clouds and air,
That is in the green leaves among the groves,
Maintains a deep and reverential care
For them the quiet creatures whom he loves.

“The Pleasure-house is dust:—behind, before,
This is no common waste, no common gloom;
But Nature, in due course of time, once more
Shall here put on her beauty and her bloom.

“She leaves these objects to a slow decay,
That what we are, and have been, may be known;
But, at the coming of the milder day,
These monuments shall all be overgrown.

“One lesson, Shepherd, let us two divide,
Taught both by what she shows, and what conceals,
Never to blend our pleasure or our pride
With sorrow of the meanest thing that feels.”

Ellen Irwin

OR, THE BRAES OF KIRTLE¹

FAIR Ellen Irwin, when she sate
Upon the braes of Kirtle,
Was lovely as a Grecian Maid
Adorn'd with wreaths of myrtle.
Young Adam Bruce beside her lay,
And there did they beguile the day
With love and gentle speeches,
Beneath the budding beeches.

From many Knights and many Squires
The Bruce had been selected,
And Gordon, fairest of them all,
By Ellen was rejected.
Sad tidings to that noble Youth!
For it may be proclaim'd with truth,
If Bruce hath lov'd sincerely,
That Gordon loves as dearly.
But what is Gordon's beauteous face?
And what are Gordon's crosses
To them who sit by Kirtle's Braes

¹ The Kirtle is a River in the Southern part of Scotland, on whose banks the events here related took place.

Upon the verdant mosses?
 Alas that ever he was born!
 The Gordon, couch'd behind a thorn,
 Sees them and their caressing,
 Beholds them bless'd and blessing.

Proud Gordon cannot bear the thoughts
 That through his brain are travelling,
 And, starting up, to Bruce's heart
 He launch'd a deadly jav'lin!
 Fair Ellen saw it when it came,
 And, stepping forth to meet the same,
 Did with her body cover
 The Youth her chosen lover.

And, falling into Bruce's arms,
 Thus died the beauteous Ellen,
 Thus from the heart of her true-love
 The mortal spear repelling.
 And Bruce, as soon as he had slain
 The Gordon, sail'd away to Spain,
 And fought with rage incessant
 Against the Moorish Crescent.

But many days and many months,
 And many years ensuing,
 This wretched Knight did vainly seek
 The death that he was wooing:
 So coming back across the wave,
 Without a groan on Ellen's grave
 His body he extended,
 And there his sorrow ended.

Now ye who willingly have heard
 The tale I have been telling,
 May in Kirkonnell church-yard view
 The grave of lovely Ellen:
 By Ellen's side the Bruce is laid,
 And, for the stone upon his head,
 May no rude hand deface it,
 And its forlorn Hic jacet.

[*Lucy*]

I

STRANGE fits of passion I have known,
And I will dare to tell,
But in the lover's ear alone,
What once to me befel.

When she I lov'd was strong and gay
And like a rose in June,
I to her cottage bent my way,
Beneath the evening moon.

Upon the moon I fix'd my eye,
All over the wide lea;
My horse trudg'd on, and we drew nigh
Those paths so dear to me.

And now we reach'd the orchard plot,
And, as we climb'd the hill,
Towards the roof of Lucy's cot
The moon descended still.

In one of those sweet dreams I slept,
Kind Nature's gentlest boon!
And, all the while, my eyes I kept
On the descending moon.

My horse mov'd on; hoof after hoof
He rais'd and never stopp'd:
When down behind the cottage roof
At once the planet dropp'd.

What fond and wayward thoughts will slide
Into a Lover's head—
"O mercy!" to myself I cried,
"If Lucy should be dead!"

Song

SHE dwelt among th' untrodden ways
 Beside the springs of Dove,
 A Maid whom there were none to praise
 And very few to love.

A Violet by a mossy stone
 Half-hidden from the Eye!
 —Fair, as a star when only one
 Is shining in the sky!

She *liv'd* unknown, and few could know
 When Lucy ceas'd to be;
 But she is in her Grave, and Oh!
 The difference to me.

III

A SLUMBER did my spirit seal,
 I had no human fears:
 She seem'd a thing that could not feel
 The touch of earthly years.

No motion has she now, no force;
 She neither hears nor sees,
 Roll'd round in earth's diurnal course
 With rocks and stones and trees!

IV

THREE years she grew in sun and shower,
 Then Nature said, "A lovelier flower
 On earth was never sown;
 This Child I to myself will take,
 She shall be mine, and I will make
 A Lady of my own.

“Myself will to my darling be
Both law and impulse, and with me
The Girl in rock and plain,
In earth and heaven, in glade and bower,
Shall feel an overseeing power
To kindle or restrain.

“She shall be sportive as the fawn
That wild with glee across the lawn
Or up the mountain springs,
And hers shall be the breathing balm,
And hers the silence and the calm
Of mute insensate things.

“The floating clouds their state shall lend
To her, for her the willow bend,
Nor shall she fail to see
Even in the motions of the storm
A beauty that shall mould her form
By silent sympathy.

“The stars of midnight shall be dear
To her, and she shall lean her ear
In many a secret place
Where rivulets dance their wayward round,
And beauty born of murmuring sound
Shall pass into her face.

“And vital feelings of delight
Shall rear her form to stately height,
Her virgin bosom swell,
Such thoughts to Lucy I will give
While she and I together live
Here in this happy dell.”

Thus Nature spake—The work was done—
How soon my Lucy's race was run!
She died and left to me
This heath, this calm and quiet scene,
The memory of what has been,
And never more will be.

I TRAVELL'D among unknown Men,
 In Lands beyond the Sea;
 Nor England! did I know till then
 What love I bore to thee.

'Tis past, that melancholy dream!
 Nor will I quit thy shore
 A second time; for still I seem
 To love thee more and more.

Among thy mountains did I feel
 The joy of my desire;
 And She I cherish'd turn'd her wheel
 Beside an English fire.

Thy mornings shew'd—thy nights conceal'd
 The bowers where Lucy play'd;
 And thine is, too, the last green field
 Which Lucy's eyes survey'd!

Lucy Gray

OF T had I heard of Lucy Gray,
 And when I cross'd the Wild,
 I chanc'd to see at break of day
 The solitary Child.

No Mate, no comrade Lucy knew;
 She dwelt on a wide Moor,
 The sweetest Thing that ever grew
 Beside a human door!

You yet may spy the Fawn at play,
 The Hare upon the Green;
 But the sweet face of Lucy Gray
 Will never more be seen.

“To-night will be a stormy night,
 You to the Town must go,
 And take a lantern, Child, to light
 Your Mother thro' the snow.”

“That, Father! will I gladly do;
 ’Tis scarcely afternoon—
 The Minster-clock has just struck two,
 And yonder is the Moon.”

At this the Father rais’d his hook
 And snapp’d a faggot-band;
 He plied his work, and Lucy took
 The lantern in her hand.

Not blither is the mountain roe,
 With many a wanton stroke
 Her feet disperse the powd’ry snow
 That rises up like smoke.

The storm came on before its time,
 She wander’d up and down,
 And many a hill did Lucy climb
 But never reach’d the Town.

The wretched Parents all that night
 Went shouting far and wide;
 But there was neither sound nor sight
 To serve them for a guide.

At day-break on a hill they stood
 That overlook’d the Moor;
 And thence they saw the Bridge of Wood
 A furlong from their door.

And now they homeward turn’d, and cry’d
 “In Heaven we all shall meet!”
 When in the snow the Mother spied
 The print of Lucy’s feet.

Then downward from the steep hill’s edge
 They track’d the footmarks small;
 And through the broken hawthorn-hedge,
 And by the long stone-wall;

And then an open field they cross'd,
The marks were still the same;
They track'd them on, nor ever lost,
And to the Bridge they came.

They follow'd from the snowy bank
Those footmarks, one by one,
Into the middle of the plank,
And further there were none.

Yet some maintain that to this day
She is a living Child,
That you may see sweet Lucy Gray
Upon the lonesome Wild.

O'er rough and smooth she trips along,
And never looks behind;
And sings a solitary song
That whistles in the wind.



'Tis said, that some have died for love:
And here and there a church-yard grave is found
In the cold North's unhallow'd ground,
Because the wretched man himself had slain,
His love was such a grievous pain.
And there is one whom I five years have known;
He dwells alone
Upon Helvellyn's side.
He loved—The pretty Barbara died,
And thus he makes his moan:
Three years had Barbara in her grave been laid
When thus his moan he made.

Oh! move thou Cottage from behind that oak
Or let the aged tree uprooted lie,
That in some other way yon smoke
May mount into the sky!
The clouds pass on; they from the Heavens depart:
I look—the sky is empty space;
I know not what I trace;
But when I cease to look, my hand is on my heart.

O! what a weight is in these shades! Ye leaves,
When will that dying murmur be suppress'd?
Your sound my heart of peace bereaves,
It robs my heart of rest.
Thou Thrush, that singest loud and loud and free,
Into yon row of willows flit,
Upon that alder sit;
Or sing another song, or chuse another tree.

Roll back, sweet rill! back to thy mountain bounds,
And there for ever be thy waters chain'd!
For thou dost haunt the air with sounds
That cannot be sustain'd;
If still beneath that pine-tree's ragged bough
Headlong yon waterfall must come,
Oh let it then be dumb!—
Be any thing, sweet rill, but that which thou art now.

Thou Eglantine whose arch so proudly towers
(Even like a rainbow spanning half the vale)
Thou one fair shrub, oh! shed thy flowers,
And stir not in the gale.
For thus to see thee nodding in the air,
To see thy arch thus stretch and bend,
Thus rise and thus descend,
Disturbs me, till the sight is more than I can bear.

The man who makes this feverish complaint
Is one of giant stature, who could dance
Equipp'd from head to foot in iron mail.
Ah gentle Love! if ever thought was thine
To store up kindred hours for me, thy face
Turn from me, gentle Love, nor let me walk
Within the sound of Emma's voice, or know
Such happiness as I have known to-day.

Inscription

FOR THE SPOT WHERE THE HERMITAGE STOOD ON ST. HERBERT'S
ISLAND, DERWENT-WATER

IF thou in the dear love of some one friend
Hast been so happy, that thou know'st what thoughts
Will, sometimes, in the happiness of love
Make the heart sink, then wilt thou reverence
This quiet spot.—St. Herbert hither came
And here, for many seasons, from the world
Remov'd, and the affections of the world
He dwelt in solitude. He living here,
This island's sole inhabitant! had left
A Fellow-labourer, whom the good Man lov'd
As his own soul; and when within his cave
Alone he knelt before the crucifix
While o'er the lake the cataract of Lodore
Peal'd to his orisons, and when he pac'd
Along the beach of this small isle and thought
Of his Companion, he had pray'd that both
Might die in the same moment. Nor in vain
So pray'd he:—as our Chronicles report,
Though here the Hermit number'd his last days,
Far from St. Cuthbert his beloved friend,
Those holy men both died in the same hour.

Inscription

FOR THE HOUSE (AN OUTHOUSE) ON THE ISLAND
AT GRASMERE

RUDE is this Edifice, and Thou hast seen
Buildings, albeit rude, that have maintain'd
Proportions more harmonious, and approach'd
To somewhat of a closer fellowship
With the ideal grace. Yet as it is
Do take it in good part; for he, the poor
Vitruvius of our village, had no help
From the great city; never on the leaves
Of red Morocco folio saw display'd
The skeletons and pre-existing ghosts

Of Beauties yet unborn, the rustic Box,
 Snug Cot, with Coach-house, Shed and Hermitage.
 It is a homely pile, yet to these walls
 The heifer comes in the snow-storm, and here
 The new-dropp'd lamb finds shelter from the wind.
 And hither does one Poet sometimes row
 His pinnace, a small vagrant barge, up-piled
 With plenteous store of heath and wither'd fern,
 A lading which he with his sickle cuts
 Among the mountains, and beneath this roof
 He makes his summer couch, and here at noon
 Spreads out his limbs, while, yet unshorn, the sheep
 Panting beneath the burthen of their wool
 Lie round him, even as if they were a part
 Of his own household: nor, while from his bed
 He through that door-place looks toward the lake
 And to the stirring breezes, does he want
 Creations lovely as the work of sleep,
 Fair sights, and visions of romantic joy.

[*Matthew*]

In the School of ————— is a tablet on which are inscribed, in gilt letters, the names of the several persons who have been Schoolmasters there since the foundation of the School, with the time at which they entered upon and quitted their office. Opposite one of those names the Author wrote the following lines.

IF Nature, for a favorite Child
 In thee hath temper'd so her clay,
 That every hour thy heart runs wild
 Yet never once doth go astray,

Read o'er these lines; and then review
 This tablet, that thus humbly rears
 In such diversity of hue
 Its history of two hundred years.

—When through this little wreck of fame,
 Cypher and syllable, thine eye
 Has travell'd down to Matthew's name,
 Pause with no common sympathy.

And if a sleeping tear should wake
Then be it neither check'd nor stay'd:
For Matthew a request I make
Which for himself he had not made.

Poor Matthew, all his frolics o'er,
Is silent as a standing pool,
Far from the chimney's merry roar,
And murmur of the village school.

The sighs which Matthew heav'd were sighs
Of one tir'd out with fun and madness;
The tears which came to Matthew's eyes
Were tears of light, the oil of gladness.

Yet sometimes when the secret cup
Of still and serious thought went round
He seem'd as if he drank it up,
He felt with spirit so profound.

—Thou soul of God's best earthly mould,
Thou happy soul, and can it be
That these two words of glittering gold
Are all that must remain of thee?

The Two April Mornings

WE walk'd along, while bright and red
Uprose the morning sun,
And Matthew stopp'd, he look'd, and said,
"The will of God be done!"

A village Schoolmaster was he,
With hair of glittering grey;
As blithe a man as you could see
On a spring holiday.

And on that morning, through the grass,
And by the streaming rills,
We travell'd merrily to pass
A day among the hills.

“Our work,” said I, “was well begun;
Then, from thy breast what thought,
Beneath so beautiful a sun,
So sad a sigh has brought?”

A second time did Matthew stop,
And fixing still his eye
Upon the eastern mountain-top
To me he made reply.

“Yon cloud with that long purple cleft
Brings fresh into my mind
A day like this which I have left
Full thirty years behind.

“And on that slope of springing corn
The self-same crimson hue
Fell from the sky that April morn,
The same which now I view!

“With rod and line my silent sport
I plied by Derwent’s wave,
And, coming to the church, stopp’d short
Beside my Daughter’s grave.

“Nine summers had she scarcely seen
The pride of all the vale;
And then she sang!—she would have been
A very nightingale.

“Six feet in earth my Emma lay,
And yet I lov’d her more,
For so it seem’d, than till that day
I e’er had loved before.

“And, turning from her grave, I met
Beside the church-yard Yew
A blooming Girl, whose hair was wet
With points of morning dew.

“A basket on her head she bare,
Her brow was smooth and white,
To see a Child so very fair,
It was a pure delight!

“No fountain from its rocky cave
E’er tripp’d with foot so free,
She seem’d as happy as a wave
That dances on the sea.

“There came from me a sign of pain
Which I could ill confine;
I look’d at her and look’d again;
—And did not wish her mine.”

Matthew is in his grave, yet now
Methinks I see him stand,
As at that moment, with his bough
Of wilding in his hand.

The Fountain

A CONVERSATION

WE talk’d with open heart, and tongue
Affectionate and true,
A pair of Friends, though I was young,
And Matthew seventy-two.

We lay beneath a spreading oak,
Beside a mossy seat,
And from the turf a fountain broke,
And gurgled at our feet.

Now, Matthew, let us try to match
This water’s pleasant tune
With some old Border-song, or catch
That suits a summer’s noon.

Or of the Church-clock and the chimes
Sing here beneath the shade,
That half-mad thing of witty rhymes
Which you last April made!

LYRICAL BALLADS

In silence Matthew lay, and eyed
The spring beneath the tree;
And thus the dear old Man replied,
The grey-hair'd Man of glee.

“Down to the vale this water steers,
How merrily it goes!
'Twill murmur on a thousand years,
And flow as now it flows.

“And here, on this delightful day,
I cannot chuse but think
How oft, a vigorous Man, I lay
Beside this Fountain's brink.

“My eyes are dim with childish tears,
My heart is idly stirr'd,
For the same sound is in my ears,
Which in those days I heard.

“Thus fares it still in our decay:
And yet the wiser mind
Mourns less for what age takes away
Than what it leaves behind.

“The blackbird in the summer trees,
The lark upon the hill,
Let loose their carols when they please,
Are quiet when they will.

“With Nature never do *they* wage
A foolish strife; they see
A happy youth, and their old age
Is beautiful and free:

“But we are press'd by heavy laws,
And often, glad no more,
We wear a face of joy, because
We have been glad of yore.

“If there is one who need bemoan
His kindred laid in earth,
The household hearts that were his own,
It is the man of mirth.

“My days, my Friend, are almost gone,
My life has been approv’d,
And many love me, but by none
Am I enough belov’d.”

“Now both himself and me he wrongs,
The man who thus complains!
I live and sing my idle songs
Upon these happy plains,

“And, Matthew, for thy Children dead
I’ll be a son to thee!”
At this he grasp’d his hands, and said,
“Alas! that cannot be.”

We rose up from the fountain-side,
And down the smooth descent
Of the green sheep-track did we glide,
And through the wood we went,

And, ere we came to Leonard’s Rock,
He sang those witty rhymes
About the crazy old church-clock
And the bewilder’d chimes.

Nutting

—————It seems a day,
(I speak of one from many singled out)
One of those heavenly days which cannot die,
When forth I sallied from our cottage-door,¹
And with a wallet o’er my shoulder slung,
A nutting crook in hand, I turn’d my steps
Towards the distant woods, a Figure quaint,

¹ The house at which I was boarded during the time I was at School.

Trick'd out in proud disguise of Beggar's weeds
 Put on for that occasion, by advice
 And exhortation of my frugal Dame.
 Motley accoutrement! of power to smile
 At thorns, and brakes, and brambles, and, in truth,
 More ragged than need was. Among the woods,
 And o'er the pathless rocks, I forc'd my way
 Until, at length, I came to one dear nook
 Unvisited, where not a broken bough
 Droop'd with its wither'd leaves, ungracious sign
 Of devastation, but the hazels rose
 Tall and erect, with milk-white clusters hung,
 A virgin scene!—A little while I stood,
 Breathing with such suppression of the heart
 As joy delights in; and with wise restraint
 Voluptuous, fearless of a rival, eyed
 The banquet, or beneath the trees I sate
 Among the flowers, and with the flowers I play'd;
 A temper known to those, who, after long
 And weary expectation, have been bless'd
 With sudden happiness beyond all hope.—
 —Perhaps it was a bower beneath whose leaves
 The violets of five seasons re-appear
 And fade, unseen by any human eye,
 Where fairy water-breaks do murmur on
 For ever, and I saw the sparkling foam,
 And with my cheek on one of those green stones
 That, fleec'd with moss, beneath the shady trees,
 Lay round me scatter'd like a flock of sheep,
 I heard the murmur and the murmuring sound,
 In that sweet mood when pleasure loves to pay
 Tribute to ease, and, of its joy secure,
 The heart luxuriates with indifferent things,
 Wasting its kindliness on stocks and stones,
 And on the vacant air. Then up I rose,
 And dragg'd to earth both branch and bough,
 with crash
 And merciless ravage; and the shady nook
 Of hazels, and the green and mossy bower
 Deform'd and sullied, patiently gave up
 Their quiet being: and unless I now

Confound my present feelings with the past,
 Even then, when from the bower I turn'd away,
 Exulting, rich beyond the wealth of kings,
 I felt a sense of pain when I beheld
 The silent trees and the intruding sky.—

Then, dearest Maiden! move along these shades
 In gentleness of heart with gentle hand
 Touch,—for there is a Spirit in the woods.

The Old Cumberland Beggar

A DESCRIPTION

The class of Beggars to which the old man here described belongs, will probably soon be extinct. It consisted of poor, and, mostly, old and infirm persons, who confined themselves to a stated round in their neighbourhood, and had certain fixed days, on which, at different houses, they regularly received charity; sometimes in money, but mostly in provisions.

I SAW an aged Beggar in my walk,
 And he was seated by the highway side
 On a low structure of rude masonry
 Built at the foot of a huge hill, that they
 Who lead their horses down the steep rough road
 May thence remount at ease. The aged man
 Had placed his staff across the broad smooth stone
 That overlays the pile, and from a bag
 All white with flour the dole of village dames,
 He drew his scraps and fragments, one by one,
 And scann'd them with a fix'd and serious look
 Of idle computation. In the sun,
 Upon the second step of that small pile,
 Surrounded by those wild unpeopled hills,
 He sate, and ate his food in solitude;
 And ever, scatter'd from his palsied hand,
 That, still attempting to prevent the waste,
 Was baffled still, the crumbs in little showers
 Fell on the ground, and the small mountain birds,
 Not venturing yet to peck their destin'd meal,
 Approached within the length of half his staff.

Him from my childhood have I known, and then
 He was so old, he seems not older now;
 He travels on, a solitary man,
 So helpless in appearance, that for him
 The sauntering horseman-traveller does not throw
 With careless hand his alms upon the ground,
 But stops, that he may safely lodge the coin
 Within the old Man's hat; nor quits him so,
 But still when he has given his horse the rein
 Towards the aged Beggar turns a look,
 Sidelong and half-reverted. She who tends
 The toll-gate, when in summer at her door
 She turns her wheel, if on the road she sees
 The aged Beggar coming, quits her work,
 And lifts the latch for him that he may pass.
 The Post-boy when his rattling wheels o'ertake
 The aged Beggar, in the woody lane,
 Shouts to him from behind, and, if perchance
 The old Man does not change his course, the Boy
 Turns with less noisy wheels to the road-side,
 And passes gently by, without a curse
 Upon his lips, or anger at his heart.
 He travels on, a solitary Man,
 His age has no companion. On the ground
 His eyes are turn'd, and, as he moves along,
They move along the ground; and evermore,
 Instead of common and habitual sight
 Of fields with rural works, of hill and dale,
 And the blue sky, one little span of earth
 Is all his prospect. Thus, from day to day,
 Bowbent, his eyes for ever on the ground,
 He plies his weary journey, seeing still,
 And never knowing that he sees, some straw,
 Some scatter'd leaf, or marks which, in one track,
 The nails of cart or chariot wheel have left
 Impress'd on the white road, in the same line,
 At distance still the same. Poor Traveller!
 His staff trails with him, scarcely do his feet
 Disturb the summer dust, he is so still
 In look and motion that the cottage curs,
 Ere he have pass'd the door, will turn away

Weary of barking at him. Boys and girls,
 The vacant and the busy, maids and youths,
 And urchins newly breech'd all pass him by:
 Him even the slow-pac'd waggon leaves behind.

But deem not this man useless.—Statesmen! ye
 Who are so restless in your wisdom, ye
 Who have a broom still ready in your hands
 To rid the world of nuisances; ye proud,
 Heart-swoln, while in your pride ye contemplate
 Your talents, power, and wisdom, deem him not
 A burthen of the earth. 'Tis Nature's law
 That none, the meanest of created things,
 Or forms created the most vile and brute,
 The dullest or most noxious, should exist
 Divorced from good, a spirit and pulse of good,
 A life and soul to every mode of being
 Inseparably link'd. While thus he creeps
 From door to door, the Villagers in him
 Behold a record which together binds
 Past deeds and offices of charity
 Else unremember'd, and so keeps alive
 The kindly mood in hearts which lapse of years,
 And that half-wisdom half-experience gives
 Make slow to feel, and by sure steps resign
 To selfishness and cold oblivious cares.
 Among the farms and solitary huts,
 Hamlets, and thinly-scattered villages,
 Where'er the aged Beggar takes his rounds,
 The mild necessity of use compels
 To acts of love; and habit does the work
 Of reason, yet prepares that after joy
 Which reason cherishes. And thus the soul,
 By that sweet taste of pleasure unpursu'd,
 Doth find itself insensibly dispos'd
 To virtue and true goodness. Some there are,
 By their good works exalted, lofty minds
 And meditative, authors of delight
 And happiness, which to the end of time
 Will live, and spread, and kindle; minds like these,
 In childhood, from this solitary being,

This helpless wanderer, have perchance receiv'd,
 (A thing more precious far than all that books
 Or the solitudes of love can do!)
 That first mild touch of sympathy and thought,
 In which they found their kindred with a world
 Where want and sorrow were. The easy man
 Who sits at his own door, and like the pear
 Which overhangs his head from the green wall,
 Feeds in the sunshine; the robust and young,
 The prosperous and unthinking, they who live
 Shelter'd, and flourish in a little grove
 Of their own kindred, all behold in him
 A silent monitor, which on their minds
 Must needs impress a transitory thought
 Of self-congratulation, to the heart
 Of each recalling his peculiar boons,
 His charters and exemptions; and perchance,
 Though he to no one give the fortitude
 And circumspection needful to preserve
 His present blessings, and to husband up
 The respite of the season, he, at least,
 And 'tis no vulgar service, makes them felt.

Yet further.—Many, I believe, there are
 Who live a life of virtuous decency,
 Men who can hear the Decalogue and feel
 No self-reproach, who of the moral law
 Establish'd in the land where they abide
 Are strict observers, and not negligent,
 Meanwhile, in any tenderness of heart
 Or act of love to those with whom they dwell,
 Their kindred, and the children of their blood.
 Praise be to such, and to their slumbers peace!
 —But of the poor man ask, the abject poor,
 Go and demand of him, if there be here,
 In this cold abstinence from evil deeds,
 And these inevitable charities,
 Wherewith to satisfy the human soul.
 No—man is dear to man: the poorest poor
 Long for some moments in a weary life
 When they can know and feel that they have been

Themselves the fathers and the dealers out
 Of some small blessings, have been kind to such
 As needed kindness, for this single cause,
 That we have all of us one human heart.
 —Such pleasure is to one kind Being known,
 My Neighbour, when with punctual care, each week
 Duly as Friday comes, though press'd herself
 By her own wants, she from her chest of meal
 Takes one unsparing handful for the scrip
 Of this old Mendicant, and, from her door
 Returning with exhilarated heart,
 Sits by her fire and builds her hope in heav'n.

Then let him pass, a blessing on his head!
 And while, in that vast solitude to which
 The tide of things has led him, he appears
 To breathe and live but for himself alone,
 Unblam'd, uninjur'd, let him bear about
 The good which the benignant law of heaven
 Has hung around him, and, while life is his,
 Still let him prompt the unletter'd Villagers
 To tender offices and pensive thoughts.
 Then let him pass, a blessing on his head!
 And, long as he can wander, let him breathe
 The freshness of the vallies, let his blood
 Struggle with frosty air and winter snows,
 And let the charter'd wind that sweeps the heath
 Beat his grey locks against his wither'd face.
 Reverence the hope whose vital anxiousness
 Gives the last human interest to his heart.
 May never House, misnamed of industry,
 Make him a captive; for that pent-up din,
 Those life-consuming sounds that clog the air,
 Be his the natural silence of old age.
 Let him be free of mountain solitudes,
 And have around him, whether heard or not,
 The pleasant melody of woodland birds.
 Few are his pleasures; if his eyes, which now
 Have been so long familiar with the earth,
 No more behold the horizontal sun
 Rising or setting, let the light at least

Find a free entrance to their languid orbs.
And let him, *where* and *when* he will, sit down
Beneath the trees, or by the grassy bank
Of high-way side, and with the little birds
Share his chance-gather'd meal, and, finally,
As in the eye of Nature he has liv'd,
So in the eye of Nature let him die.

A Poet's Epitaph

ART thou a Statesman, in the van
Of public business train'd and bred?
—First learn to love one living man;
Then may'st thou think upon the dead.

A Lawyer art thou?—draw not nigh;
Go, carry to some other place
The hardness of thy coward eye,
The falsehood of thy sallow face.

Art thou a man of purple cheer?
A rosy man, right plump to see?
Approach: yet, Doctor, not too near:
This grave no cushion is for thee.

Art thou a man of gallant pride,
A Soldier, and no man of chaff?
Welcome!—but lay thy sword aside,
And lean upon a Peasant's staff.

Physician art thou? One, all eyes,
Philosopher! a fingering slave,
One that would peep and botanize
Upon his mother's grave?

Wrapp'd closely in thy sensual fleece
O turn aside, and take, I pray,
That he below may rest in peace,
Thy pin-point of a soul away!

—A Moralist perchance appears;
Led, Heaven knows how! to this poor sod:
And He has neither eyes nor ears;
Himself his world, and his own God;

One to whose smooth-rubb'd soul can cling
Nor form nor feeling great or small,
A reasoning, self-sufficing thing,
An intellectual All in All!

Shut close the door! press down the latch:
Sleep in thy intellectual crust,
Nor lose ten tickings of thy watch,
Near this unprofitable dust

But who is He with modest looks,
And clad in homely russet brown?
He murmurs near the running brooks
A music sweeter than their own.

He is retired as noontide dew,
Or fountain in a noonday grove;
And you must love him, ere to you
He will seem worthy of your love.

The outward shews of sky and earth,
Of hill and valley he has view'd;
And impulses of deeper birth
Have come to him in solitude.

In common things that round us lie
Some random truths he can impart,
The harvest of a quiet eye
That broods and sleeps on his own heart.

But he is weak, both man and boy,
Hath been an idler in the land;
Contented if he might enjoy
The things which others understand.

—Come hither in thy hour of strength,
Come, weak as is a breaking wave!
Here stretch thy body at full length;
Or build thy house upon this grave.—

Poems on the Naming of Places

ADVERTISEMENT

By Persons resident in the country and attached to rural objects, many places will be found unnamed or of unknown names, where little Incidents will have occurred, or feelings been experienced, which will have given to such places a private and peculiar interest. From a wish to give some sort of record to such Incidents or renew the gratification of such Feelings, Names have been given to Places by the Author and some of his Friends, and the following Poems written in consequence.

I

IT was an April Morning: fresh and clear
 The Rivulet, delighting in its strength,
 Ran with a young man's speed, and yet the voice
 Of waters which the winter had supplied
 Was soften'd down into a vernal tone.
 The spirit of enjoyment and desire,
 And hopes and wishes, from all living things
 Went circling, like a multitude of sounds.
 The budding groves appear'd as if in haste
 To spur the steps of June; as if their shades
 Of *various* green were hindrances that stood
 Between them and their object: yet, meanwhile,
 There was such deep contentment in the air
 That every naked ash, and tardy tree
 Yet leafless, seem'd as though the countenance
 With which it look'd on this delightful day
 Were native to the summer.—Up the brook
 I roam'd in the confusion of my heart,
 Alive to all things and forgetting all.
 At length I to a sudden turning came
 In this continuous glen, where down a rock
 The stream, so ardent in its course before,
 Sent forth such sallies of glad sound, that all
 Which I till then had heard, appear'd the voice
 Of common pleasure: beast and bird, the lamb,
 The Shepherd's dog, the linnet and the thrush
 Vied with this waterfall, and made a song
 Which, while I listen'd, seem'd like the wild growth

Or like some natural produce of the air
That could not cease to be. Green leaves were here,
But 'twas the foliage of the rocks, the birch,
The yew, the holly, and the bright green thorn,
With hanging islands of resplendent furze:
And on a summit, distant a short space,
By any who should look beyond the dell,
A single mountain Cottage might be seen.
I gaz'd and gaz'd, and to myself I said,
"Our thoughts at least are ours; and this wild nook,
My EMMA, I will dedicate to thee."

—Soon did the spot become my other home,
My dwelling, and my out-of-doors abode.
And, of the Shepherds who have seen me there,
To whom I sometimes in our idle talk
Have told this fancy, two or three, perhaps,
Years after we are gone and in our graves,
When they have cause to speak of this wild place,
May call it by the name of EMMA'S DELL.

II

TO JOANNA

AMID the smoke of cities did you pass
Your time of early youth, and there you learn'd,
From years of quiet industry, to love
The living Beings by your own fire-side,
With such a strong devotion, that your heart
Is slow towards the sympathies of them
Who look upon the hills with tenderness,
And make dear friendships with the streams and groves.
Yet we who are transgressors in this kind,
Dwelling retired in our simplicity
Among the woods and fields, we love you well,
Joanna! and I guess, since you have been
So distant from us now for two long years,
That you will gladly listen to discourse
However trivial, if you thence are taught
That they, with whom you once were happy, talk
Familiarly of you and of old times.

While I was seated, now some ten days past,
 Beneath those lofty firs, that overtop
 Their ancient neighbour, the old Steeple tower,
 The Vicar from his gloomy house hard by
 Came forth to greet me, and when he had ask'd,
 "How fares Joanna, that wild-hearted Maid!
 And when will she return to us?" he paus'd,
 And after short exchange of village news,
 He with grave looks demanded, for what cause,
 Reviving obsolete Idolatry,
 I like a Runic Priest, in characters
 Of formidable size, had chisel'd out
 Some uncouth name upon the native rock,
 Above the Rotha, by the forest side.
 —Now, by those dear immunities of heart
 Engender'd betwixt malice and true love,
 I was not loth to be so catechiz'd,
 And this was my reply:—"As it befel,
 One summer morning we had walk'd abroad
 At break of day, Joanna and myself.
 —'Twas that delightful season, when the broom,
 Full flower'd, and visible on every steep,
 Along the copses runs in veins of gold.
 Our pathway led us on to Rotha's banks,
 And when we came in front of that tall rock
 Which looks towards the East, I there stopp'd short,
 And trac'd the lofty barrier with my eye
 From base to summit; such delight I found
 To note in shrub and tree, in stone and flower,
 That intermixture of delicious hues,
 Along so vast a surface, all at once,
 In one impression, by connecting force
 Of their own beauty, imag'd in the heart.
 —When I had gaz'd perhaps two minutes' space,
 Joanna, looking in my eyes, beheld
 That ravishment of mine, and laugh'd aloud.
 The rock, like something starting from a sleep,
 Took up the Lady's voice, and laugh'd again:
 That ancient Woman seated on Helm-crag
 Was ready with her cavern; Hammar-Scar,
 And the tall Steep of Silver-How sent forth

A noise of laughter; southern Loughrigg heard,
 And Fairfield answer'd with a mountain tone:
 Helvellyn far into the clear blue sky
 Carried the Lady's voice,—old Skiddaw blew
 His speaking trumpet;—back out of the clouds
 Of Glaramara southward came the voice;
 And Kirkstone toss'd it from his misty head.
 Now whether, (said I to our cordial Friend
 Who in the hey-day of astonishment
 Smil'd in my face) this were in simple truth
 A work accomplish'd by the brotherhood
 Of ancient mountains, or my ear was touch'd
 With dreams and visionary impulses,
 Is not for me to tell; but sure I am
 That there was a loud uproar in the hills.
 And, while we both were listening, to my side
 The fair Joanna drew, as if she wish'd
 To shelter from some object of her fear.
 —And hence, long afterwards, when eighteen moons
 Were wasted, as I chanc'd to walk alone
 Beneath this rock, at sun-rise, on a calm
 And silent morning, I sate down, and there,
 In memory of affections old and true,
 I chisel'd out in those rude characters
 Joanna's name upon the living stone.
 And I, and all who dwell by my fire-side
 Have call'd the lovely rock, Joanna's Rock."

NOTE. In Cumberland and Westmoreland are several Inscriptions upon the native rock which from the wasting of Time and the rudeness of the Workmanship had been mistaken for Runic. They are without doubt Roman.

The Rotha, mentioned in this poem, is the River which flowing through the Lakes of Grasmere and Rydale falls into Wyndermere. On Helm-Crag, that impressive single Mountain at the head of the Vale of Grasmere, is a Rock which from most points of view bears a striking resemblance to an Old Woman cowering. Close by this rock is one of those Fissures or Caverns, which in the language of the Country are called Dungeons. The other Mountains either immediately surround the Vale of Grasmere, or belong to the same Cluster.

III

THERE is an Eminence,—of these our hills
 The last that parleys with the setting sun.
 We can behold it from our Orchard-seat,¹
 And, when at evening we pursue our walk
 Along the public way, this Cliff, so high
 Above us, and so distant in its height,
 Is visible, and often seems to send
 Its own deep quiet to restore our hearts.
 The meteors make of it a favorite haunt:
 The star of Jove, so beautiful and large
 In the mid heav'ns, is never half so fair
 As when he shines above it. 'Tis in truth
 The loneliest place we have among the clouds.
 And She who dwells with me, whom I have lov'd
 With such communion, that no place on earth
 Can ever be a solitude to me,
 Hath said, this lonesome Peak shall bear my Name.

IV

ANARROW girdle of rough stones and crags,
 A rude and natural causeway, interpos'd
 Between the water and a winding slope
 Of copse and thicket, leaves the eastern shore
 Of Grasmere safe in its own privacy.
 And there, myself and two beloved Friends,
 One calm September morning, ere the mist
 Had altogether yielded to the sun,
 Saunter'd on this retir'd and difficult way.
 —Ill suits the road with one in haste, but we
 Play'd with our time; and, as we stroll'd along,
 It was our occupation to observe
 Such objects as the waves had toss'd ashore,
 Feather, or leaf, or weed, or wither'd bough,
 Each on the other heap'd along the line
 Of the dry wreck. And in our vacant mood,

¹ [In the Fenwick note to this poem, Wordsworth says: "It is not accurate that the Eminence here alluded to could be seen from our orchard-seat. It rises above the road by the side of Grasmere lake, towards Keswick, and its name is Stone-Arthur."]

Not seldom did we stop to watch some tuft
 Of dandelion seed or thistle's beard,
 Which, seeming lifeless half, and half impell'd
 By some internal feeling, skimm'd along
 Close to the surface of the lake that lay
 Asleep in a dead calm, ran closely on
 Along the dead calm lake, now here, now there,
 In all its sportive wanderings all the while
 Making report of an invisible breeze
 That was its wings, its chariot, and its horse,
 Its very playmate, and its moving soul.
 —And often, trifling with a privilege
 Alike indulg'd to all, we paus'd, one now,
 And now the other, to point out, perchance
 To pluck, some flower or water-weed, too fair
 Either to be divided from the place
 On which it grew, or to be left alone
 To its own beauty. Many such there are,
 Fair ferns and flowers, and chiefly that tall plant
 So stately, of the Queen Osmunda nam'd,
 Plant lovelier in its own retir'd abode
 On Grasmere's beach, than Naiad by the side
 Of Grecian brook, or Lady of the Mere
 Sole-sitting by the shores of old Romance.
 —So fared we that bright morning: from the fields
 Meanwhile, a noise was heard, the busy mirth
 Of Reapers, Men and Women, Boys and Girls.
 Delighted much to listen to those sounds,
 And in the fashion which I have describ'd,
 Feeding unthinking fancies, we advanc'd
 Along the indented shore; when suddenly,
 Through a thin veil of glittering haze, we saw
 Before us on a point of jutting land
 The tall and upright figure of a Man
 Attir'd in peasant's garb, who stood alone
 Angling beside the margin of the lake.
 That way we turn'd our steps; nor was it long,
 Ere making ready comments on the sight
 Which then we saw, with one and the same voice
 We all cried out, that he must be indeed
 An idle man, who thus could lose a day

Of the mid harvest, when the labourer's hire
Is ample, and some little might be stor'd
Wherewith to chear him in the winter time.
Thus talking of that Peasant we approach'd
Close to the spot where with his rod and line
He stood alone; whereat he turn'd his head
To greet us—and we saw a man worn down
By sickness, gaunt and lean, with sunken cheeks
And wasted limbs, his legs so long and lean
That for my single self I look'd at them,
Forgetful of the body they sustain'd.—
Too weak to labour in the harvest field,
The man was using his best skill to gain
A pittance from the dead unfeeling lake
That knew not of his wants. I will not say
What thoughts immediately were ours, nor how
The happy idleness of that sweet morn,
With all its lovely images, was chang'd
To serious musing and to self-reproach.
Nor did we fail to see within ourselves
What need there is to be reserved in speech,
And temper all our thoughts with charity.
—Therefore, unwilling to forget that day,
My Friend, Myself, and She who then receiv'd
The same admonishment, have call'd the place
By a memorial name, uncouth indeed
As e'er by Mariner was giv'n to Bay
Or Foreland on a new discover'd coast,
And POINT RASH-JUDGMENT is the Name it bears.

v

TO M. H.

OUR walk was far among the ancient trees:
There was no road, nor any wood-man's path,
But the thick umbrage, checking the wild growth
Of weed and sapling, on the soft green turf
Beneath the branches of itself had made
A track which brought us to a slip of lawn,
And a small bed of water in the woods.
All round this pool both flocks and herds might drink

On its firm margin, even as from a well
 Or some stone-bason which the Herdsman's hand
 Had shap'd for their refreshment, nor did sun
 Or wind from any quarter ever come
 But as a blessing to this calm recess,
 This glade of water and this one green field.
 The spot was made by Nature for herself:
 The travellers know it not, and 'twill remain
 Unknown to them; but it is beautiful,
 And if a man should plant his cottage near,
 Should sleep beneath the shelter of its trees,
 And blend its waters with his daily meal,
 He would so love it that in his death-hour
 Its image would survive among his thoughts,
 And therefore, my sweet MARY, this still nook
 With all its beeches we have named from You.

Michael

A PASTORAL POEM

IF from the public way you turn your steps
 Up the tumultuous brook of Green-head Gill,
 You will suppose that with an upright path
 Your feet must struggle; in such bold ascent
 The pastoral Mountains front you, face to face.
 But courage! for beside that boisterous Brook
 The mountains have all open'd out themselves,
 And made a hidden valley of their own.
 No habitation there is seen; but such
 As journey thither find themselves alone
 With a few sheep, with rocks and stones, and kites
 That overhead are sailing in the sky.
 It is in truth an utter solitude,
 Nor should I have made mention of this Dell
 But for one object which you might pass by,
 Might see and notice not. Beside the brook
 There is a straggling heap of unhewn stones!
 And to that place a story appertains,
 Which, though it be ungarnish'd with events,

Is not unfit, I deem, for the fire-side,
 Or for the summer shade. It was the first,
 The earliest of those tales that spake to me
 Of Shepherds, dwellers in the vallies, men
 Whom I already lov'd, not verily
 For their own sakes, but for the fields and hills
 Where was their occupation and abode.
 And hence this Tale, while I was yet a boy
 Careless of books, yet having felt the power
 Of Nature, by the gentle agency
 Of natural objects led me on to feel
 For passions that were not my own, and think
 At random and imperfectly indeed
 On man; the heart of man and human life.
 Therefore, although it be a history
 Homely and rude, I will relate the same
 For the delight of a few natural hearts,
 And with yet fonder feeling, for the sake
 Of youthful Poets, who among these Hills
 Will be my second self when I am gone.

Upon the Forest-side in Grasmere Vale
 There dwelt a Shepherd, Michael was his name,
 An old man, stout of heart, and strong of limb.
 His bodily frame had been from youth to age
 Of an unusual strength: his mind was keen,
 Intense and frugal, apt for all affairs,
 And in his Shepherd's calling he was prompt
 And watchful more than ordinary men.
 Hence he had learn'd the meaning of all winds,
 Of blasts of every tone, and often-times
 When others heeded not, He heard the South
 Make subterraneous music, like the noise
 Of Bagpipers on distant Highland hills;
 The Shepherd, at such warning, of his flock
 Bethought him, and he to himself would say
 The winds are now devising work for me!
 And truly at all times the storm, that drives
 The Traveller to a shelter, summon'd him
 Up to the mountains: he had been alone

Amid the heart of many thousand mists
 That came to him and left him on the heights.
 So liv'd he till his eightieth year was pass'd.

And grossly that man errs, who should suppose
 That the green Valleys, and the Streams and Rocks
 Were things indifferent to the Shepherd's thoughts.
 Fields, where with chearful spirits he had breath'd
 The common air; the hills, which he so oft
 Had climb'd with vigorous steps; which had impress'd
 So many incidents upon his mind
 Of hardship, skill or courage, joy or fear;
 Which like a book preserv'd the memory
 Of the dumb animals, whom he had sav'd,
 Had fed or shelter'd, linking to such acts,
 So grateful in themselves, the certainty
 Of honorable gains; these fields, these hills
 Which were his living Being, even more
 Than his own Blood—what could they less? had laid
 Strong hold on his affections, were to him
 A pleasurable feeling of blind love,
 The pleasure which there is in life itself,

He had not passed his days in singleness.
 He had a Wife, a comely Matron, old
 Though younger than himself full twenty years.
 She was a woman of a stirring life,
 Whose heart was in her house: two wheels she had
 Of antique form, this large for spinning wool,
 That small for flax, and if one wheel had rest,
 It was because the other was at work.
 The Pair had but one Inmate in their house,
 An only Child, who had been born to them
 When Michael telling o'er his years began
 To deem that he was old, in Shepherd's phrase,
 With one foot in the grave. This only son,
 With two brave sheep dogs tried in many a storm,
 The one of an inestimable worth,
 Made all their Household. I may truly say,
 That they were as a proverb in the vale
 For endless industry. When day was gone,

And from their occupations out of doors
 The Son and Father were come home, even then
 Their labour did not cease, unless when all
 Turn'd to their cleanly supper-board, and there
 Each with a mess of pottage and skimm'd milk,
 Sate round their basket pil'd with oaten cakes,
 And their plain home-made cheese. Yet when their meal
 Was ended, LUKE (for so the Son was nam'd)
 And his old Father, both betook themselves
 To such convenient work, as might employ
 Their hands by the fire-side; perhaps to card
 Wool for the House-wife's spindle, or repair
 Some injury done to sickle, flail, or scythe,
 Or other implement of house or field.

Down from the cieling by the chimney's edge,
 Which in our ancient uncouth country style
 Did with a huge projection overbrow
 Large space beneath, as duly as the light
 Of day grew dim, the House-wife hung a lamp;
 An aged utensil, which had perform'd
 Service beyond all others of its kind.
 Early at evening did it burn and late,
 Surviving Comrade of uncounted Hours
 Which going by from year to year had found
 And left the Couple neither gay perhaps
 Nor chearful, yet with objects and with hopes
 Living a life of eager industry.
 And now, when LUKE was in his eighteenth year,
 There by the light of this old lamp they sate,
 Father and Son, while late into the night
 The House-wife plied her own peculiar work,
 Making the cottage thro' the silent hours
 Murmur as with the sound of summer flies.
 Not with a waste of words, but for the sake
 Of pleasure, which I know that I shall give
 To many living now, I of this Lamp
 Speak thus minutely: for there are no few
 Whose memories will bear witness to my tale.
 The Light was famous in its neighbourhood,
 And was a public Symbol of the life,

The thrifty Pair had liv'd. For, as it chanc'd,
 Their Cottage on a plot of rising ground
 Stood single, with large prospect North and South,
 High into Easedale; up to Dunmal-Raise,
 And Westward to the village near the Lake.
 And from this constant light so regular
 And so far seen, the House itself by all
 Who dwelt within the limits of the vale,
 Both old and young, was nam'd The Evening Star.

Thus living on through such a length of years,
 The Shepherd, if he lov'd himself, must needs
 Have lov'd his Help-mate; but to Michael's heart
 This Son of his old age was yet more dear—
 Effect which might perhaps have been produc'd
 By that instinctive tenderness, the same
 Blind Spirit, which is in the blood of all,
 Or that a child, more than all other gifts,
 Brings hope with it, and forward-looking thoughts,
 And stirrings of inquietude, when they
 By tendency of nature needs must fail.
 From such, and other causes, to the thoughts
 Of the old Man his only Son was now
 The dearest object that he knew on earth.
 Exceeding was the love he bare to him,
 His Heart and his Heart's joy! For oftentimes
 Old Michael, while he was a babe in arms,
 Had done him female service, not alone
 For dalliance and delight, as is the use
 Of Fathers, but with patient mind enforc'd
 To acts of tenderness; and he had rock'd
 His cradle with a woman's gentle hand.

And in a later time, ere yet the Boy
 Had put on Boy's attire, did Michael love,
 Albeit of a stern unbending mind,
 To have the young one in his sight, when he
 Had work by his own door, or when he sate
 With sheep before him on his Shepherd's stool,
 Beneath that large old Oak, which near their door
 Stood, and from its enormous breadth of shade

Chosen for the Shearer's covert from the sun,
Thence in our rustic dialect was call'd
The CLIPPING TREE,¹ a name which yet it bears.
There, while they two were sitting in the shade,
With others round them, earnest all and blithe,
Would Michael exercise his heart with looks
Of fond correction and reproof bestow'd
Upon the child, if he disturb'd the sheep
By catching at their legs, or with his shouts
Scar'd them, while they lay still beneath the shears.

And when by Heaven's good grace the Boy grew up
A healthy Lad, and carried in his cheek
Two steady roses that were five years old,
Then Michael from a winter coppice cut
With his own hand a sapling, which he hoop'd
With iron, making it throughout in all
Due requisites a perfect Shepherd's Staff,
And gave it to the Boy: wherewith equipp'd
He as a Watchman oftentimes was plac'd
At gate or gap, to stem or turn the flock,
And to his office prematurely call'd,
There stood the urchin, as you will divine,
Something between a hindrance and a help,
And for this cause not always, I believe,
Receiving from his Father hire of praise.
Though nought was left undone which staff or voice,
Or looks, or threatening gestures could perform.
But soon as Luke, full ten years old, could stand
Against the mountain blasts, and to the heights,
Not fearing toil, nor length of weary ways,
He with his Father daily went, and they
Were as companions, why should I relate
That objects which the Shepherd lov'd before
Were dearer now? that from the Boy there came
Feelings and emanations, things which were
Light to the sun and music to the wind;
And that Old Man's heart seemed born again.
Thus in his Father's sight the Boy grew up:
And now, when he had reached his eighteenth year,

¹ Clipping is the word used in the North of England for shearing.

He was his comfort and his daily hope.

While this good household thus were living on
 From day to day, to Michael's ear there came
 Distressful tidings. Long before the time
 Of which I speak, the Shepherd had been bound
 In surety for his Brother's Son, a man
 Of an industrious life, and ample means,
 But unforeseen misfortunes suddenly
 Had press'd upon him, and old Michael now
 Was summon'd to discharge the forfeiture,
 A grievous penalty, but little less
 Than half his substance. This un-look'd for claim
 At the first hearing, for a moment took
 More hope out of his life than he supposed
 That any old man ever could have lost.
 As soon as he had gather'd so much strength
 That he could look his trouble in the face,
 It seem'd that his sole refuge was to sell
 A portion of his patrimonial fields.
 Such was his first resolve; he thought again,
 And his heart fail'd him. "Isabel," said he,
 Two evenings after he had heard the news,
 "I have been toiling more than seventy years,
 And in the open sun-shine of God's love
 Have we all liv'd, yet if these fields of ours
 Should pass into a Stranger's hand, I think
 That I could not lie quiet in my grave.
 Our lot is a hard lot; the Sun itself
 Has scarcely been more diligent than I,
 And I have liv'd to be a fool at last
 To my own family. An evil Man
 That was, and made an evil choice, if he
 Were false to us; and if he were not false,
 There are ten thousand to whom loss like this
 Had been no sorrow. I forgive him—but
 'Twere better to be dumb than to talk thus.
 When I began, my purpose was to speak
 Of remedies and of a chearful hope.
 Our Luke shall leave us, Isabel; the land
 Shall not go from us, and it shall be free,

He shall possess it, free as is the wind
 That passes over it. We have, thou knowest,
 Another Kinsman, he will be our friend
 In this distress. He is a prosperous man,
 Thriving in trade, and Luke to him shall go,
 And with his Kinsman's help and his own thrift
 He quickly will repair this loss, and then
 May come again to us. If here he stay,
 What can be done? Where every one is poor
 What can be gained?" At this, the old man paus'd,
 And Isabel sate silent, for her mind
 Was busy, looking back into past times.
 There's Richard Bateman, thought she to herself,
 He was a parish-boy—at the church-door
 They made a gathering for him, shillings, pence,
 And halfpennies, wherewith the Neighbours bought
 A Basket, which they fill'd with Pedlar's wares,
 And with this Basket on his arm, the Lad
 Went up to London, found a Master there,
 Who out of many chose the trusty Boy
 To go and overlook his merchandise
 Beyond the seas, where he grew wond'rous rich,
 And left estates and monies to the poor,
 And at his birth-place built a Chapel, floor'd
 With Marble, which he sent from foreign lands.
 These thoughts, and many others of like sort,
 Pass'd quickly thro' the mind of Isabel,
 And her face brighten'd. The Old Man was glad,
 And thus resum'd. "Well! Isabel, this scheme
 These two days has been meat and drink to me.
 Far more than we have lost is left us yet.
 —We have enough—I wish indeed that I
 Were younger, but this hope is a good hope.
 —Make ready Luke's best garments, of the best
 Buy for him more, and let us send him forth
 To-morrow, or the next day, or to-night:
 —If he could go, the Boy should go to-night."
 Here Michael ceas'd, and to the fields went forth
 With a light heart. The House-wife for five days
 Was restless morn and night, and all day long
 Wrought on with her best fingers to prepare

Things needful for the journey of her Son.
 But Isabel was glad when Sunday came
 To stop her in her work; for, when she lay
 By Michael's side, she for the last two nights
 Heard him, how he was troubled in his sleep:
 And when they rose at morning she could see
 That all his hopes were gone. That day at noon
 She said to Luke, while they two by themselves
 Were sitting at the door, "Thou must not go,
 We have no other Child but thee to lose,
 None to remember—do not go away,
 For if thou leave thy Father he will die."
 The Lad made answer with a jocund voice,
 And Isabel, when she had told her fears,
 Recover'd heart. That evening her best fare
 Did she bring forth, and all together sate
 Like happy people round a Christmas fire.

Next morning Isabel resum'd her work,
 And all the ensuing week the house appear'd
 As cheerful as a grove in Spring: at length
 The expected letter from their Kinsman came,
 With kind assurances that he would do
 His utmost for the welfare of the Boy,
 To which requests were added that forthwith
 He might be sent to him. Ten times or more
 The letter was read over; Isabel
 Went forth to shew it to the neighbours round:
 Nor was there at that time on English Land
 A prouder heart than Luke's. When Isabel
 Had to her house return'd, the Old Man said,
 "He shall depart to-morrow." To this word
 The House-wife answered, talking much of things
 Which, if at such short notice he should go,
 Would surely be forgotten. But at length
 She gave consent, and Michael was at ease.

Near the tumultuous brook of Green-head Gill,
 In that deep Valley, Michael had design'd
 To build a Sheep-fold, and, before he heard
 The tidings of his melancholy loss,

For this same purpose he had gathered up
 A heap of stones, which close to the brook side
 Lay thrown together, ready for the work.
 With Luke that evening thitherward he walk'd;
 And soon as they had reach'd the place he stopp'd,
 And thus the Old Man spake to him. "My Son,
 To-morrow thou wilt leave me; with full heart
 I look upon thee, for thou art the same
 That wert a promise to me ere thy birth,
 And all thy life hast been my daily joy.
 I will relate to thee some little part
 Of our two histories; 'twill do thee good
 When thou art from me, even if I should speak
 Of things thou canst not know of.—After thou
 First cam'st into the world, as it befalls
 To new-born infants, thou didst sleep away
 Two days, and blessings from thy Father's tongue
 Then fell upon thee. Day by day pass'd on,
 And still I lov'd thee with encreasing love.
 Never to living ear came sweeter sounds
 Than when I heard thee by our own fire-side
 First uttering without words a natural tune,
 When thou, a feeding babe, didst in thy joy
 Sing at thy Mother's breast. Month follow'd month,
 And in the open fields my life was pass'd
 And in the mountains, else I think that thou
 Hadst been brought up upon thy father's knees.
 —But we were playmates, Luke; among these hills,
 As well thou know'st, in us the old and young
 Have play'd together, nor with me didst thou
 Lack any pleasure which a boy can know."
 Luke had a manly heart; but at these words
 He sobb'd aloud; the Old Man grasp'd his hand,
 And said, "Nay do not take it so—I see
 That these are things of which I need not speak.
 —Even to the utmost I have been to thee
 A kind and a good Father: and herein
 I but repay a gift which I myself
 Receiv'd at others' hands, for, though now old
 Beyond the common life of man, I still
 Remember them who lov'd me in my youth.

Both of them sleep together: here they liv'd
 As all their Forefathers had done, and when
 At length their time was come, they were not loth
 To give their bodies to the family mold.
 I wish'd that thou should'st live the life they liv'd.
 But 'tis a long time to look back, my Son,
 And see so little gain from sixty years.
 These fields were burthen'd when they came to me;
 Till I was forty years of age, not more
 Than half of my inheritance was mine.
 I toil'd and toil'd; God bless'd me in my work,
 And till these three weeks past the land was free.
 —It looks as if it never could endure
 Another Master. Heaven forgive me, Luke,
 If I judge ill for thee, but it seems good
 That thou should'st go." At this the Old Man paus'd,
 Then, pointing to the Stones near which they stood,
 Thus, after a short silence, he resum'd:
 "This was a work for us, and now, my Son,
 It is a work for me. But, lay one Stone—
 Here, lay it for me, Luke, with thine own hands.
 I for the purpose brought thee to this place.
 Nay, Boy, be of good hope:—we both may live
 To see a better day. At eighty-four
 I still am strong and stout;—do thou thy part,
 I will do mine.—I will begin again
 With many tasks that were resign'd to thee;
 Up to the heights, and in among the storms,
 Will I without thee go again, and do
 All works which I was wont to do alone,
 Before I knew thy face.—Heaven bless thee, Boy!
 Thy heart these two weeks has been beating fast
 With many hopes—it should be so—yes—yes—
 I knew that thou could'st never have a wish
 To leave me, Luke, thou hast been bound to me
 Only by links of love, when thou art gone
 What will be left to us!—But, I forget
 My purposes. Lay now the corner-stone,
 As I requested, and hereafter, Luke,
 When thou art gone away, should evil men
 Be thy companions, let this Sheep-fold be

Thy anchor and thy shield; amid all fear
And all temptation, let it be to thee
An emblem of the life thy Fathers liv'd,
Who, being innocent, did for that cause
Bestir them in good deeds. Now, fare thee well—
When thou return'st, thou in this place wilt see
A work which is not here, a covenant
'Twill be between us—but whatever fate
Befall thee, I shall love thee to the last,
And bear thy memory with me to the grave."

The Shepherd ended here; and Luke stoop'd down,
And as his Father had requested, laid
The first stone of the Sheep-fold; at the sight
The Old Man's grief broke from him, to his heart
He press'd his Son, he kissed him and wept;
And to the House together they return'd.

Next morning, as had been resolv'd, the Boy
Began his journey, and when he had reach'd
The public Way, he put on a bold face;
And all the Neighbours as he pass'd their doors
Came forth, with wishes and with farewell pray'rs,
That follow'd him till he was out of sight.

A good report did from their Kinsman come,
Of Luke and his well-doing; and the Boy
Wrote loving letters, full of wond'rous news,
Which, as the House-wife phrased it, were throughout
The prettiest letters that were ever seen.
Both parents read them with rejoicing hearts.
So, many months pass'd on: and once again
The Shepherd went about his daily work
With confident and cheerful thoughts; and now
Sometimes when he could find a leisure hour
He to that valley took his way, and there
Wrought at the Sheep-fold. Meantime Luke began
To slacken in his duty, and at length,
He in the dissolute city gave himself
To evil courses: ignominy and shame
Fell on him, so that he was driven at last
To seek a hiding-place beyond the seas.

There is a comfort in the strength of love;
 'Twill make a thing endurable, which else
 Would break the heart:—Old Michael found it so.
 I have convers'd with more than one who well
 Remember the Old Man, and what he was
 Years after he had heard this heavy news.
 His bodily frame had been from youth to age
 Of an unusual strength. Among the rocks
 He went, and still look'd up upon the sun,
 And listen'd to the wind; and as before
 Perform'd all kinds of labour for his Sheep,
 And for the land his small inheritance.
 And to that hollow Dell from time to time
 Did he repair, to build the Fold of which
 His flock had need. 'Tis not forgotten yet
 The pity which was then in every heart
 For the Old Man—and 'tis believ'd by all
 That many and many a day he thither went,
 And never lifted up a single stone.
 There, by the Sheep-fold, sometimes was he seen
 Sitting alone, with that his faithful Dog,
 Then old, beside him, lying at his feet.
 The length of full seven years from time to time
 He at the building of this Sheep-fold wrought,
 And left the work unfinished when he died.

Three years, or little more, did Isabel
 Survive her Husband: at her death the estate
 Was sold, and went into a Stranger's hand.
 The Cottage which was nam'd The Evening Star
 Is gone, the ploughshare has been through the ground
 On which it stood; great changes have been wrought
 In all the neighbourhood, yet the Oak is left
 That grew beside their Door; and the remains
 Of the unfinished Sheep-fold may be seen
 Beside the boisterous brook of Green-head Gill.

A NIGHT-PIECE

THERE IS A LITTLE UNPRETENDING RILL

YEW-TREES

A FAREWELL

STANZAS WRITTEN IN MY POCKET-COPY OF
THOMSON'S "CASTLE OF INDOLENCE"

ON THE FINAL SUBMISSION OF THE
TYROLESE

A Night-Piece was written in January 1798 and published in 1815.

The entry in Dorothy Wordsworth's *Journal* for 25 January 1798 shows the close relation between her observations and Wordsworth's poetry:

The sky spread over with one continuous cloud, whitened by the light of the moon, which, though her dim shape was seen, did not throw forth so strong a light as to chequer the earth with shadows. At once the clouds seemed to cleave asunder, left her in the centre of a black-blue vault. She sailed along, followed by multitudes of stars, small and bright, and sharp. Their brightness seemed concentrated (half-moon).

"*There is a little unpretending Rill*" was written in 1801 or 1802 and published in 1820. Wordsworth says in the Fenwick Note:

The rill trickles down the hill-side into Windermere, near Lowwood. My sister and I, on our first visit together to this part of the country, walked from Kendal, and we rested to refresh ourselves by the side of the lake where the streamlet falls into it. This sonnet was written some years after in recollection of that happy ramble, that most happy day and hour.

Yew-Trees was published in 1815. The Fenwick Note dates it "Grasmere 1808" and goes on:

These yew-trees are still standing, but the spread of that at Lorton is much diminished by mutilation. I will here mention that a little way up the hill, on the road leading from Rosthwaite to Stonethwaite, lay the trunk of a yew-tree, which appeared as you approached, so vast was its diameter, like the entrance of a cave, and not a small one. Calculating upon what I have observed of the slow growth of this tree in rocky situations, and of its durability, I have often thought that the one I am describing must be as old as the Christian era.

A Farewell was finished on 29 May 1802, though subsequently altered and published in 1815. According to the Fenwick Note, it was "composed just before my sister and I went to fetch Mary [Hutchinson] from Gallow-hill, near Scarborough," i.e. before Wordsworth's marriage to Mary Hutchinson in October, 1802.

Stanzas Written in my Pocket-Copy of Thomson's "Castle of Indolence" was written in May 1802 and published in 1815. The Fenwick Note has:

Composed in the Orchard, Grasmere, Town-End. Coleridge was living with us much at the time; his son Hartley has said, that his father's character and habits are here preserved in a livelier way than anything that has been written about him.

Despite Matthew Arnold's assertion that the last three stanzas refer to Wordsworth and the first four to Coleridge, the reverse is certainly the case.

On the Final Submission of the Tyrolese was written in 1809, published in *The Friend*, 21 December 1809, and in *Poems*, 1815.

A Night-Piece

————THE sky is overcast
With a continuous cloud of texture close,
Heavy and wan, all whitened by the Moon,
Which through that veil is indistinctly seen,
A dull, contracted circle, yielding light
So feebly spread that not a shadow falls,
Chequering the ground, from rock, plant, tree, or tower.
At length a pleasant instantaneous gleam
Startles the pensive traveller as he treads
His lonesome path, with unobserving eye
Bent earthwards; he looks up—the clouds are split
Asunder,—and above his head he sees
The clear moon, and the glory of the heavens.
There, in a black blue vault she sails along,
Followed by multitudes of stars, that, small
And sharp, and bright, along the dark abyss
Drive as she drives;—how fast they wheel away,
Yet vanish not!—the wind is in the tree,
But they are silent;—still they roll along
Immeasurably distant;—and the vault,
Built round by those white clouds, enormous clouds,
Still deepens its unfathomable depth.
At length the Vision closes; and the mind,
Not undisturbed by the delight it feels,
Which slowly settles into peaceful calm,
Is left to muse upon the solemn scene.

THERE is a little unpretending Rill
Of limpid water, humbler far than aught
That ever among men or naiads sought
Notice or name!—It quivers down the hill,
Furrowing its shallow way with dubious will;
Yet to my mind this scanty Stream is brought
Oftener than mightiest Floods, whose path is wrought
Through wastes of sand, and forests dark and chill.

THERE IS A LITTLE UNPRETENDING RILL

Do thou, even thou, O faithful Anna! say
Why this small Streamlet is to me so dear;
Thou know'st, that while enjoyments disappear
And sweet remembrances like flowers decay,
The immortal spirit of one happy day
Lingers upon its marge, in vision clear!

Yew-Trees

THERE is a Yew-tree, pride of Lorton Vale,
Which to this day stands single, in the midst
Of its own darkness, as it stood of yore,
Not loth to furnish weapons for the Bands
Of Umfraville or Percy ere they marched
To Scotland's Heaths; or Those that crossed the Sea
And drew their sounding bows at Azincour,
Perhaps at earlier Crecy, or Poictiers.
Of vast circumference and gloom profound
This solitary Tree!—a living thing
Produced too slowly ever to decay;
Of form and aspect too magnificent
To be destroyed. But worthier still of note
Are those fraternal Four of Borrowdale,
Joined in one solemn and capacious grove;
Huge trunks!—and each particular trunk a growth
Of intertwined fibres serpentine
Up-coiling, and inveterately convolved,—
Nor uninformed with Phantasy, and looks
That threaten the prophane;—a pillared shade,
Upon whose grassless floor of red-brown hue,
By sheddings from the pining umbrage tinged
Perennially—beneath whose sable roof
Of boughs, as if for festal purpose, decked
With unrejoicing berries, ghostly Shapes
May meet at noontide—Fear and trembling Hope,
Silence and Foresight—Death the Skeleton
And Time the Shadow,—there to celebrate,
As in a natural temple scattered o'er
With altars undisturbed of mossy stone,

YEW-TREES

United worship; or in mute repose
To lie, and listen to the mountain flood
Murmuring from Glaramara's inmost caves.

[*A Farewell*]

COMPOSED IN THE YEAR 1802

FAREWELL, thou little Nook of mountain-ground,
Thou rocky corner in the lowest stair
Of that magnificent Temple which doth bound
One side of our whole Vale with grandeur rare;
Sweet Garden-orchard, eminently fair,
The loveliest spot that man hath ever found,
Farewell!—we leave thee to heaven's peaceful care,
Thee, and the Cottage which thou dost surround.

Our Boat is safely anchored by the shore,
And safely she will ride when we are gone;
The flowering shrubs that decorate our door
Will prosper, though untended and alone:
Fields, goods, and far-off chattels we have none;
These narrow bounds contain our private store
Of things earth makes and sun doth shine upon;
Here are they in our sight—we have no more.

Sunshine and shower be with you, bud and bell,
For two months now in vain we shall be sought;
We leave you here in solitude to dwell
With these our latest gifts of tender thought;
Thou, like the morning, in thy saffron coat
Bright gowan, and marsh-marygold, farewell!
Whom from the borders of the Lake we brought,
And placed together near our rocky well.

We go for One to whom ye will be dear;
And she will prize this Bower, this Indian shed,
Our own contrivance, Building without peer,
A gentle Maid, whose heart is lowly bred,
Whose pleasures are in wild fields gathered!
With joyousness and with a thoughtful cheer
She'll come to you,—to you herself will wed,—
And love the blessed life which we lead here.

A FAREWELL

Dear Spot! which we have watched with tender heed,
Bringing thee chosen plants and blossoms blown
Among the distant mountains, flower and weed
Which thou hast taken to thee as thy own,
Making all kindness register'd and known;
Thou for our sakes, though Nature's Child indeed,
Fair in thyself and beautiful alone,
Hast taken gifts which thou dost little need.

And O most constant, yet most fickle Place,
That hast thy wayward moods, as thou dost shew
To them who look not daily in thy face;
Who, being loved, in love no bounds dost know,
And say'st when we forsake thee, "Let them go!"
Thou easy-hearted Thing, with thy wild race
Of weeds and flowers, till we return be slow,—
And travel with the year at a soft pace.

Help us to tell her tales of years gone by,
And this sweet spring the best beloved and best.
Joy will be flown in its mortality;
Something must stay to tell us of the rest.
Here, thronged with primroses, the steep rock's breast
Glitter'd at evening like a starry sky;
And in this Bush our Sparrow built her nest,
Of which I sung one Song that will not die.

O happy Garden! whose seclusion deep
Hath been so friendly to industrious hours;
And to soft slumbers that did gently steep
Our spirits, carrying with them dreams of flowers
And wild notes warbled among leafy bowers;
Two burning months let summer overleap,
And, coming back with Her who will be ours,
Into thy bosom we again shall creep.

Stanzas

WRITTEN IN MY POCKET-COPY OF THOMSON'S "CASTLE OF
INDOLENCE"

WITHIN our happy Castle there dwelt One
Whom without blame I may not overlook;
For never sun on living creature shone
Who more devout enjoyment with us took.
Here on his hours he hung as on a book;
On his own time here would he float away,
As doth a fly upon a summer brook;
But go to-morrow—or belike to-day—
Seek for him,—he is fled; and whither none can say.

Thus often would he leave our peaceful home
And find elsewhere his business or delight;
Out of our Valley's limits did he roam:
Full many a time, upon a stormy night,
His voice came to us from the neighbouring height:
Oft did we see him driving full in view
At mid-day when the sun was shining bright;
What ill was on him, what he had to do,
A mighty wonder bred among our quiet crew.

Ah! piteous sight it was to see this man
When he came back to us, a withered flower,—
Or like a sinful creature, pale and wan.
Down would he sit; and without strength or power
Look at the common grass from hour to hour:
And oftentimes, how long I fear to say,
Where apple-trees in blossom made a bower,
Retired in that sunshiny shade he lay;
And, like a naked Indian, slept himself away.

Great wonder to our gentle Tribe it was
Whenever from our Valley he withdrew;
For happier soul no living creature has
Than he had, being here the long day through.
Some thought he was a lover, and did woo:
Some thought far worse of him, and judged him wrong:

But Verse was what he had been wedded to;
 And his own mind did like a tempest strong
 Come to him thus, and drove the weary Wight along.

With him there often walked in friendly guise
 Or lay upon the moss by brook or tree
 A noticeable Man with large grey eyes,
 And a pale face that seemed undoubtedly
 As if a blooming face it ought to be;
 Heavy his low-hung lip did oft appear
 Deprest by weight of musing Phantasy;
 Profound his forehead was, though not severe;
 Yet some did think that he had little business here:

Sweet heaven forefend! his was a lawful right;
 Noisy he was, and gamesome as a boy;
 His limbs would toss about him with delight
 Like branches when strong winds the trees annoy.
 Nor lacked his calmer hours device or toy
 To banish listlessness and irksome care;
 He would have taught you how you might employ
 Yourself; and many did to him repair,—
 And, certes, not in vain; he had inventions rare.

Expedients, too, of simplest sort he tried:
 Long blades of grass, plucked round him as he lay,
 Made—to his ear attentively applied—
 A Pipe on which the wind would deftly play;
 Glasses he had, that little things display,—
 The beetle with his radiance manifold,
 A mailed angel on a battle day;
 And cups of flowers, and herbage green and gold;
 And all the gorgeous sights which fairies do behold.

He would entice that other Man to hear
 His music, and to view his imagery:
 And, sooth, these two did love each other dear,
 As far as love in such a place could be;
 There did they dwell—from earthly labour free,
 As happy spirits as were ever seen;
 If but a bird, to keep them company,

Or butterfly sate down, they were, I ween,
As pleased as if the same had been a Maiden Queen.

On the Final Submission of the Tyrolese

IT was a *moral* end for which they fought;
Else how, when mighty Thrones were put to shame,
Could they, poor Shepherds, have preserved an aim,
A resolution, or enlivening thought?
Nor hath that moral good been *vainly* sought;
For in their magnanimity and fame
Powers have they left—an impulse—and a claim
Which neither can be overturned nor bought.
Sleep, Warriors, sleep! among your hills repose!
We know that ye, beneath the stern controul
Of awful prudence, keep the unvanquished soul.
And when, impatient of her guilt and woes
Europe breaks forth; then, Shepherds! shall ye rise
For perfect triumph o'er your Enemies.

CRITICISM

This section contains all Wordsworth's main critical work from the *Advertisement* prefaced to *Lyrical Ballads*, 1798, to the *Essay Supplementary to the Preface* of *Poems*, 1815. The only considerable critical essay omitted is the *Postscript* to *Yarrow Revisited and Other Poems*, 1835, in which Wordsworth makes his clearest but most tedious statement of the relation between his poetry and his theories of society.

CRITICISM

Advertisement

TO LYRICAL BALLADS, 1798

IT is the honourable characteristic of Poetry that its materials are to be found in every subject which can interest the human mind. The evidence of this fact is to be sought, not in the writings of Critics, but in those of Poets themselves.

The majority of the following poems are to be considered as experiments. They were written chiefly with a view to ascertain how far the language of conversation in the middle and lower classes of society is adapted to the purposes of poetic pleasure. Readers accustomed to the gaudiness and inane phraseology of many modern writers, if they persist in reading this book to its conclusion, will perhaps frequently have to struggle with feelings of strangeness and awkwardness: they will look round for poetry, and will be induced to enquire by what species of courtesy these attempts can be permitted to assume that title. It is desirable that such readers, for their own sakes, should not suffer the solitary word Poetry, a word of very disputed meaning, to stand in the way of their gratification; but that, while they are perusing this book, they should ask themselves if it contains a natural delineation of human passions, human characters, and human incidents; and if the answer be favourable to the author's wishes, that they should consent to be pleased in spite of that most dreadful enemy to our pleasures, our own pre-established codes of decision.

Readers of superior judgement may disapprove of the style in which many of these pieces are executed: it must be expected that many lines and phrases will not exactly suit their taste. It will perhaps appear to them, that wishing to avoid the prevalent fault of the day, the author has sometimes descended too low, and that many of his expressions are too familiar, and not of sufficient dignity. It is apprehended, that the more conversant the reader is with our elder writers, and with those in modern times who have been the most successful in painting manners and passions, the fewer complaints of this kind will he have to make.

An accurate taste in poetry, and in all the other arts, Sir Joshua Reynolds has observed, is an acquired talent, which can only be produced by severe thought, and a long continued intercourse with the best models of composition. This is mentioned not with so ridiculous a purpose as to prevent the most inexperienced reader from judging for himself; but merely to temper the rashness of decision, and to suggest that if poetry be a subject on which much time has not been bestowed, the judgment may be erroneous, and that in many cases it necessarily will be so.

The tale of Goody Blake and Harry Gill is founded on a well-authenticated fact which happened in Warwickshire. Of the other poems in the collection, it may be proper to say that they are either absolute inventions of the author, or facts which took place within his personal observation or that of his friends. The poem of the Thorn, as the reader will soon discover, is not supposed to be spoken in the author's own person: the character of the loquacious narrator will sufficiently shew itself in the course of the story. The Rime of the Ancyent Marinere was professedly written in imitation of the *style*, as well as of the spirit of the elder poets; but with a few exceptions, the Author believes that the language adopted in it has been equally intelligible for these three last centuries. The lines entitled Expostulation and Reply, and those which follow, arose out of conversation with a friend who was somewhat unreasonably attached to modern books of moral philosophy.

Preface

TO LYRICAL BALLADS, 1800

THE First Volume of these Poems has already been submitted to general perusal. It was published, as an experiment which, I hoped, might be of some use to ascertain, how far, by fitting to metrical arrangement a selection of the real language of men in a state of vivid sensation, that sort of pleasure and that quantity of pleasure may be imparted, which a Poet may rationally endeavour to impart.

I had formed no very inaccurate estimate of the probable effect of those Poems: I flattered myself that they who should be pleased with them would read them with more than common pleasure: and on the other hand I was well aware that by those who should dislike

them they would be read with more than common dislike. The result has differed from my expectation in this only, that I have pleased a greater number, than I ventured to hope I should please.

For the sake of variety and from a consciousness of my own weakness I was induced to request the assistance of a Friend, who furnished me with the Poems of the ANCIENT MARINER, the FOSTER-MOTHER'S TALE, the NIGHTINGALE, the DUNGEON, and the Poem entitled LOVE. I should not, however, have requested this assistance, had I not believed that the poems of my Friend would in a great measure have the same tendency as my own, and that, though there would be found a difference, there would be found no discordance in the colours of our style; as our opinions on the subject of poetry do almost entirely coincide.

Several of my Friends are anxious for the success of these Poems from a belief, that if the views, with which they were composed, were indeed realized, a class of Poetry would be produced, well adapted to interest mankind permanently, and not unimportant in the multiplicity and in the quality of its moral relations: and on this account they have advised me to prefix a systematic defence of the theory, upon which the poems were written. But I was unwilling to undertake the task, because I knew that on this occasion the Reader would look coldly upon my arguments, since I might be suspected of having been principally influenced by the selfish and foolish hope of *reasoning* him into an approbation of these particular Poems: and I was still more unwilling to undertake the task, because adequately to display my opinions and fully to enforce my arguments would require a space wholly disproportionate to the nature of a preface. For to treat the subject with the clearness and coherence, of which I believe it susceptible, it would be necessary to give a full account of the present state of the public taste in this country, and to determine how far this taste is healthy or depraved; which again could not be determined, without pointing out, in what manner language and the human mind act and react on each other, and without retracing the revolutions not of literature alone but likewise of society itself. I have therefore altogether declined to enter regularly upon this defence; yet I am sensible, that there would be some impropriety in abruptly obtruding upon the Public, without a few words of introduction, Poems so materially different from those, upon which general approbation is at present bestowed.

It is supposed, that by the act of writing in verse an Author makes a formal engagement that he will gratify certain known

habits of association, that he not only thus apprizes the Reader that certain classes of ideas and expressions will be found in his book, but that others will be carefully excluded. This exponent or symbol held forth by metrical language must in different æras of literature have excited very different expectations: for example, in the age of Catullus, Terence and Lucretius, and that of Statius or Claudian, and in our own country, in the age of Shakespeare and Beaumont and Fletcher, and that of Donne and Cowley, or Dryden, or Pope. I will not take upon me to determine the exact import of the promise which by the act of writing in verse an Author in the present day makes to his Reader; but I am certain it will appear to many persons that I have not fulfilled the terms of an engagement thus voluntarily contracted. I hope therefore the Reader will not censure me, if I attempt to state what I have proposed to myself to perform, and also, (as far as the limits of a preface will permit) to explain some of the chief reasons which have determined me in the choice of my purpose: that at least he may be spared any unpleasant feeling of disappointment, and that I myself may be protected from one of the most dishonorable accusations which can be brought against an Author, namely, that of an indolence which prevents him from endeavouring to ascertain what is his duty, or, when his duty is ascertained prevents him from performing it.

The principal object then which I proposed to myself in these Poems was to make the incidents of common life interesting by tracing in them, truly though not ostentatiously, the primary laws of our nature: chiefly as far as regards the manner in which we associate ideas in a state of excitement. Low and rustic life was generally chosen because in that situation the essential passions of the heart find a better soil in which they can attain their maturity, are less under restraint, and speak a plainer and more emphatic language; because in that situation our elementary feelings exist in a state of greater simplicity and consequently may be more accurately contemplated and more forcibly communicated; because the manners of rural life germinate from those elementary feelings; and from the necessary character of rural occupations are more easily comprehended; and are more durable: and lastly, because in that situation the passions of men are incorporated with the beautiful and permanent forms of nature. The language too of these men is adopted (purified indeed from what appear to be its real defects, from all lasting and rational causes of dislike or disgust) because such men hourly communicate with the best objects

from which the best part of language is originally derived; and because, from their rank in society and the sameness and narrow circle of their intercourse, being less under the action of social vanity they convey their feelings and notions in simple and unelaborated expressions. Accordingly such a language arising out of repeated experience and regular feelings is a more permanent and a far more philosophical language than that which is frequently substituted for it by Poets, who think that they are conferring honour upon themselves and their art in proportion as they separate themselves from the sympathies of men, and indulge in arbitrary and capricious habits of expression in order to furnish food for fickle tastes and fickle appetites of their own creation.¹

I cannot be insensible of the present outcry against the triviality and meanness both of thought and language, which some of my contemporaries have occasionally introduced into their metrical compositions; and I acknowledge that this defect, where it exists, is more dishonourable to the Writer's own character than false refinement or arbitrary innovation, though I should contend at the same time that it is far less pernicious in the sum of its consequences. From such verses the Poems in these volumes will be found distinguished at least by one mark of difference, that each of them has a worthy *purpose*. Not that I mean to say, that I always began to write with a distinct purpose formally conceived; but I believe that my habits of meditation have so formed my feelings, as that my descriptions of such objects as strongly excite those feelings, will be found to carry along with them a *purpose*. If in this opinion I am mistaken I can have little right to the name of a Poet. For all good poetry is the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings; but though this be true, Poems to which any value can be attached were never produced on any variety of subjects but by a man who being possessed of more than usual organic sensibility had also thought long and deeply. For our continued influxes of feeling are modified and directed by our thoughts, which are indeed the representatives of all our past feelings; and as by contemplating the relation of these general representatives to each other, we discover what is really important to men, so by the repetition and continuance of this act feelings connected with important subjects will be nourished, till at length, if we be originally possessed of much organic sensibility, such habits of mind will be produced that by

¹ It is worth while here to observe that the affecting parts of Chaucer are almost always expressed in language pure and universally intelligible even to this day.

obeying blindly and mechanically the impulses of those habits we shall describe objects and utter sentiments of such a nature and in such connection with each other, that the understanding of the being to whom we address ourselves, if he be in a healthful state of association, must necessarily be in some degree enlightened, his taste exalted, and his affections ameliorated.

I have said that each of these poems has a purpose. I have also informed my Reader what this purpose will be found principally to be: namely to illustrate the manner in which our feelings and ideas are associated in a state of excitement. But speaking in less general language, it is to follow the fluxes and refluxes of the mind when agitated by the great and simple affections of our nature. This object I have endeavoured in these short essays to attain by various means; by tracing the maternal passion through many of its more subtle windings, as in the poems of the IDIOT BOY and the MAD MOTHER; by accompanying the last struggles of a human being at the approach of death, cleaving in solitude to life and society, as in the Poem of the FORSAKEN INDIAN; by shewing, as in the Stanzas entitled WE ARE SEVEN, the perplexity and obscurity which in childhood attend our notion of death, or rather our utter inability to admit that notion; or by displaying the strength of fraternal, or to speak more philosophically, of moral attachment when early associated with the great and beautiful objects of nature, as in THE BROTHERS; or, as in the Incident of SIMON LEE, by placing my Reader in the way of receiving from ordinary moral sensations another and more salutary impression than we are accustomed to receive from them. It has also been part of my general purpose to attempt to sketch characters under the influence of less impassioned feelings, as in the OLD MAN TRAVELLING, THE TWO THIEVES, etc. characters of which the elements are simple, belonging rather to nature than to manners, such as exist now and will probably always exist, and which from their constitution may be distinctly and profitably contemplated. I will not abuse the indulgence of my Reader by dwelling longer upon this subject; but it is proper that I should mention one other circumstance which distinguishes these Poems from the popular Poetry of the day; it is this, that the feeling therein developed gives importance to the action and situation and not the action and situation to the feeling. My meaning will be rendered perfectly intelligible by referring my Reader to the Poems entitled POOR SUSAN and the CHILDLESS FATHER, particularly to the last Stanza of the latter Poem.

I will not suffer a sense of false modesty to prevent me from asserting, that I point my Reader's attention to this mark of distinction far less for the sake of these particular Poems than from the general importance of the subject. The subject is indeed important! For the human mind is capable of excitement without the application of gross and violent stimulants; and he must have a very faint perception of its beauty and dignity who does not know this, and who does not further know that one being is elevated above another in proportion as he possesses this capability. It has therefore appeared to me that to endeavour to produce or enlarge this capability is one of the best services in which, at any period, a Writer can be engaged; but this service, excellent at all times, is especially so at the present day. For a multitude of causes unknown to former times are now acting with a combined force to blunt the discriminating powers of the mind, and unfitting it for all voluntary exertion to reduce it to a state of almost savage torpor. The most effective of these causes are the great national events which are daily taking place, and the encreasing accumulation of men in cities, where the uniformity of their occupations produces a craving for extraordinary incident which the rapid communication of intelligence hourly gratifies. To this tendency of life and manners the literature and theatrical exhibitions of the country have conformed themselves. The invaluable works of our elder writers, I had almost said the works of Shakespear and Milton, are driven into neglect by frantic novels, sickly and stupid German Tragedies, and deluges of idle and extravagant stories in verse.—When I think upon this degrading thirst after outrageous stimulation I am almost ashamed to have spoken of the feeble effort with which I have endeavoured to counteract it; and reflecting upon the magnitude of the general evil, I should be oppressed with no dishonorable melancholy, had I not a deep impression of certain inherent and indestructible qualities of the human mind, and likewise of certain powers in the great and permanent objects that act upon it which are equally inherent and indestructible; and did I not further add to this impression a belief that the time is approaching when the evil will be systematically opposed by men of greater powers and with far more distinguished success.

Having dwelt thus long on the subjects and aim of these Poems, I shall request the Reader's permission to apprise him of a few circumstances relating to their *style*, in order, among other reasons, that I may not be censured for not having performed what I never attempted. Except in a very few instances the Reader will find

no personifications of abstract ideas in these volumes, not that I mean to censure such personifications: they may be well fitted for certain sorts of composition, but in these Poems I propose to myself to imitate, and, as far as possible, to adopt the very language of men, and I do not find that such personifications make any regular or natural part of that language. I wish to keep my Reader in the company of flesh and blood, persuaded that by so doing I shall interest him. Not but that I believe that others who pursue a different track may interest him likewise: I do not interfere with their claim, I only wish to prefer a different claim of my own. There will also be found in these volumes little of what is usually called poetic diction; I have taken as much pains to avoid it as others ordinarily take to produce it; this I have done for the reason already alleged, to bring my language near to the language of men, and further, because the pleasure which I have proposed to myself to impart is of a kind very different from that which is supposed by many persons to be the proper object of poetry. I do not know how without being culpably particular I can give my Reader a more exact notion of the style in which I wished these poems to be written than by informing him that I have at all times endeavoured to look steadily at my subject, consequently I hope it will be found that there is in these Poems little falsehood of description, and that my ideas are expressed in language fitted to their respective importance. Something I must have gained by this practice, as it is friendly to one property of all good poetry, namely good sense; but it has necessarily cut me off from a large portion of phrases and figures of speech which from father to son have long been regarded as the common inheritance of Poets. I have also thought it expedient to restrict myself still further, having abstained from the use of many expressions, in themselves proper and beautiful, but which have been foolishly repeated by bad Poets till such feelings of disgust are connected with them as it is scarcely possible by any art of association to overpower.

If in a Poem there should be found a series of lines, or even a single line, in which the language, though naturally arranged and according to the strict laws of metre, does not differ from that of prose, there is a numerous class of critics who, when they stumble upon these prosaisms as they call them, imagine that they have made a notable discovery, and exult over the Poet as over a man ignorant of his own profession. Now these men would establish a canon of criticism which the Reader will conclude he must utterly reject if he wishes to be pleased with these volumes. And it would

be a most easy task to prove to him that not only the language of a large portion of every good poem, even of the most elevated character, must necessarily, except with reference to the metre, in no respect differ from that of good prose, but likewise that some of the most interesting parts of the best poems will be found to be strictly the language of prose when prose is well written. The truth of this assertion might be demonstrated by innumerable passages from almost all the poetical writings, even of Milton himself. I have not space for much quotation; but, to illustrate the subject in a general manner, I will here adduce a short composition of Gray, who was at the head of those who by their reasonings have attempted to widen the space of separation betwixt Prose and Metrical composition, and was more than any other man curiously elaborate in the structure of his own poetic diction.

In vain to me the smiling mornings shine,
 And reddening Phoebus lifts his golden fire:
 The birds in vain their amorous descant join,
 Or chearful fields resume their green attire:
 These ears alas! for other notes repine;
A different object do these eyes require;
My lonely anguish melts no heart but mine;
And in my breast the imperfect joys expire;
 Yet Morning smiles the busy race to cheer,
 And new-born pleasure brings to happier men;
 The fields to all their wonted tribute bear;
 To warm their little loves the birds complain.
I fruitless mourn to him that cannot hear
And weep the more because I weep in vain.

It will easily be perceived that the only part of this Sonnet which is of any value is the lines printed in Italics: it is equally obvious that except in the rhyme, and in the use of the single word "fruitless" for fruitlessly, which is so far a defect, the language of these lines does in no respect differ from that of prose.

Is there then, it will be asked, no essential difference between the language of prose and metrical composition? I answer that there neither is nor can be any essential difference. We are fond of tracing the resemblance between Poetry and Painting, and, accordingly, we call them Sisters: but where shall we find bonds of connection sufficiently strict to typify the affinity betwixt metrical and prose composition? They both speak by and to the same organs; the bodies in which both of them are clothed may be said to be of the same substance, their affections are kindred and almost identical, not neces-

sarily differing even in degree; Poetry¹ sheds no tears "such as Angels weep," but natural and human tears; she can boast of no celestial Ichor that distinguishes her vital juices from those of prose; the same human blood circulates through the veins of them both.

If it be affirmed that rhyme and metrical arrangement of themselves constitute a distinction which overturns what I have been saying on the strict affinity of metrical language with that of prose, and paves the way for other distinctions which the mind voluntarily admits, I answer that the distinction of rhyme and metre is regular and uniform, and not, like that which is produced by what is usually called poetic diction, arbitrary and subject to infinite caprices upon which no calculation whatever can be made. In the one case the Reader is utterly at the mercy of the Poet respecting what imagery or diction he may choose to connect with the passion, whereas in the other the metre obeys certain laws, to which the Poet and Reader both willingly submit because they are certain, and because no interference is made by them with the passion but such as the concurring testimony of ages has shewn to heighten and improve the pleasure which co-exists with it.

It will now be proper to answer an obvious question, namely, why, professing these opinions have I written in verse? To this in the first place I reply, because, however I may have restricted myself, there is still left open to me what confessedly constitutes the most valuable object of all writing whether in prose or verse, the great and universal passions of men, the most general and interesting of their occupations, and the entire world of nature, from which I am at liberty to supply myself with endless combinations of forms and imagery. Now, granting for a moment that whatever is interesting in these objects may be as vividly described in prose, why am I to be condemned if to such description I have endeavoured to superadd the charm which by the consent of all nations is acknowledged to exist in metrical language? To this it will be answered, that a very small part of the pleasure given by Poetry depends upon the metre, and that it is injudicious to write in metre unless it be accompanied with the other artificial distinctions of style with which metre is usually accompanied, and that by

¹ I here use the word "Poetry" (though against my own judgment) as opposed to the word Prose, and synonymous with metrical composition. But much confusion has been introduced into criticism by this contradistinction of Poetry and Prose, instead of the more philosophical one of Poetry and Science. The only strict antithesis to Prose is Metre.

such deviation more will be lost from the shock which will be thereby given to the Reader's associations than will be counterbalanced by any pleasure which he can derive from the general power of numbers. In answer to those who thus contend for the necessity of accompanying metre with certain appropriate colours of style in order to the accomplishment of its appropriate end, and who also, in my opinion, greatly under-rate the power of metre in itself, it might perhaps be almost sufficient to observe that poems are extant, written upon more humble subjects, and in a more naked and simple style than what I have aimed at, which poems have continued to give pleasure from generation to generation. Now, if nakedness and simplicity be a defect, the fact here mentioned affords a strong presumption that poems somewhat less naked and simple are capable of affording pleasure at the present day; and all that I am now attempting is to justify myself for having written under the impression of this belief.

But I might point out various causes why, when the style is manly, and the subject of some importance, words metrically arranged will long continue to impart such a pleasure to mankind as he who is sensible of the extent of that pleasure will be desirous to impart. The end of Poetry is to produce excitement in coexistence with an over-balance of pleasure. Now, by the supposition, excitement is an unusual and irregular state of the mind; ideas and feelings do not in that state succeed each other in accustomed order. But if the words by which this excitement is produced are in themselves powerful, or the images and feelings have an undue proportion of pain connected with them, there is some danger that the excitement may be carried beyond its proper bounds. Now the co-presence of something regular, something to which the mind has been accustomed when in an unexcited or a less excited state, cannot but have great efficacy in tempering and restraining the passion by an intertexture of ordinary feeling. This may be illustrated by appealing to the Reader's own experience of the reluctance with which he comes to the re-perusal of the distressful parts of *Clarissa Harlowe*, or the *Gamester*. While Shakespeare's writings, in the most pathetic scenes, never act upon us as pathetic beyond the bounds of pleasure—an effect which is in a great degree to be ascribed to small, but continual and regular impulses of pleasurable surprise from the metrical arrangement.—On the other hand (what it must be allowed will much more frequently happen) if the Poet's words should be incommensurate with the passion,

and inadequate to raise the Reader to a height of desirable excitement, then, (unless the Poet's choice of his metre has been grossly injudicious) in the feelings of pleasure which the Reader has been accustomed to connect with metre in general, and in the feeling, whether chearful or melancholy, which he has been accustomed to connect with that particular movement of metre, there will be found something which will greatly contribute to impart passion to the words, and to effect the complex end which the Poet proposes to himself.

If I had undertaken a systematic defence of the theory upon which these poems are written, it would have been my duty to develope the various causes upon which the pleasure received from metrical language depends. Among the chief of these causes is to be reckoned a principle which must be well known to those who have made any of the Arts the object of accurate reflection; I mean the pleasure which the mind derives from the perception of similitude in dissimilitude. This principle is the great spring of the activity of our minds and their chief feeder. From this principle the direction of the sexual appetite, and all the passions connected with it, take their origin: it is the life of our ordinary conversation; and upon the accuracy with which similitude in dissimilitude, and dissimilitude in similitude are perceived, depend our taste and our moral feelings. It would not have been a useless employment to have applied this principle to the consideration of metre, and to have shewn that metre is hence enabled to afford much pleasure, and to have pointed out in what manner that pleasure is produced. But my limits will not permit me to enter upon this subject, and I must content myself with a general summary.

I have said that Poetry is the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings: it takes its origin from emotion recollected in tranquillity: the emotion is contemplated till by a species of reaction the tranquillity gradually disappears, and an emotion, similar to that which was before the subject of contemplation, is gradually produced, and does itself actually exist in the mind. In this mood successful composition generally begins, and in a mood similar to this it is carried on; but the emotion, of whatever kind and in whatever degree, from various causes is qualified by various pleasures, so that in describing any passions whatsoever, which are voluntarily described, the mind will upon the whole be in a state of enjoyment. Now if Nature be thus cautious in preserving in a state of enjoyment a being thus employed, the Poet ought to profit by the

lesson thus held forth to him, and ought especially to take care, that whatever passions he communicates to his Reader, those passions, if his Reader's mind be sound and vigorous, should always be accompanied with an overbalance of pleasure. Now the music of harmonious metrical language, the sense of difficulty overcome, and the blind association of pleasure which has been previously received from works of rhyme or metre of the same or similar construction, all these imperceptibly make up a complex feeling of delight, which is of the most important use in tempering the painful feeling which will always be found intermingled with powerful descriptions of the deeper passions. This effect is always produced in pathetic and impassioned poetry; while in lighter compositions the ease and gracefulness with which the Poet manages his numbers are themselves confessedly a principal source of the gratification of the Reader. I might perhaps include all which it is *necessary* to say upon this subject by affirming what few persons will deny, that of two descriptions either of passions, manners, or characters, each of them equally well executed, the one in prose and the other in verse, the verse will be read a hundred times where the prose is read once. We see that Pope, by the power of verse alone, has contrived to render the plainest common sense interesting, and even frequently to invest it with the appearance of passion. In consequence of these convictions I related in metre the Tale of GOODY BLAKE and HARRY GILL, which is one of the rudest of this collection. I wished to draw attention to the truth that the power of the human imagination is sufficient to produce such changes even in our physical nature as might almost appear miraculous. The truth is an important one; the fact (for it is a *fact*) is a valuable illustration of it. And I have the satisfaction of knowing that it has been communicated to many hundreds of people who would never have heard of it, had it not been narrated as a Ballad, and in a more impressive metre than is usual in Ballads.

Having thus adverted to a few of the reasons why I have written in verse, and why I have chosen subjects from common life, and endeavoured to bring my language near to the real language of men, if I have been too minute in pleading my own cause, I have at the same time been treating a subject of general interest; and it is for this reason that I request the Reader's permission to add a few words with reference solely to these particular poems, and to some defects which will probably be found in them. I am sensible that my associations must have sometimes been particular instead of general, and that, consequently, giving to things a false importance, some-

times from diseased impulses I may have written upon unworthy subjects; but I am less apprehensive on this account, than that my language may frequently have suffered from those arbitrary connections of feelings and ideas with particular words, from which no man can altogether protect himself. Hence I have no doubt that in some instances feelings even of the ludicrous may be given to my Readers by expressions which appeared to me tender and pathetic. Such faulty expressions, were I convinced they were faulty at present, and that they must necessarily continue to be so, I would willingly take all reasonable pains to correct. But it is dangerous to make these alterations on the simple authority of a few individuals, or even of certain classes of men; for where the understanding of an Author is not convinced, or his feelings altered, this cannot be done without great injury to himself: for his own feelings are his stay and support, and if he sets them aside in one instance, he may be induced to repeat this act till his mind loses all confidence in itself and becomes utterly debilitated. To this it may be added, that the Reader ought never to forget that he is himself exposed to the same errors as the Poet, and perhaps in a much greater degree: for there can be no presumption in saying that it is not probable he will be so well acquainted with the various stages of meaning through which words have passed, or with the fickleness or stability of the relations of particular ideas to each other; and above all, since he is so much less interested in the subject, he may decide lightly and carelessly.

Long as I have detained my Reader, I hope he will permit me to caution him against a mode of false criticism which has been applied to Poetry in which the language closely resembles that of life and nature. Such verses have been triumphed over in parodies of which Dr. Johnson's Stanza is a fair specimen.

"I put my hat upon my head,
And walk'd into the Strand,
And there I met another man
Whose hat was in his hand."

Immediately under these lines I will place one of the most justly admired stanzas of the "Babes in the Wood."

"These pretty Babes with hand in hand
Went wandering up and down;
But never more they saw the Man
Approaching from the Town"

In both of these stanzas the words, and the order of the words, in

no respect differ from the most unimpassioned conversation. There are words in both, for example, "the Strand," and "the Town," connected with none but the most familiar ideas; yet the one stanza we admit as admirable, and the other as a fair example of the superlatively contemptible. Whence arises this difference? Not from the metre, not from the language, not from the order of the words; but the *matter* expressed in Dr. Johnson's stanza is contemptible. The proper method of treating trivial and simple verses to which Dr. Johnson's stanza would be a fair parallelism is not to say this is a bad kind of poetry, or this is not poetry, but this wants sense; it is neither interesting in itself, nor can *lead* to any thing interesting; the images neither originate in that sane state of feeling which arises out of thought, nor can excite thought or feeling in the Reader. This is the only sensible manner of dealing with such verses: Why trouble yourself about the species till you have previously decided upon the genus? Why take pains to prove that an Ape is not a Newton when it is self-evident that he is not a man?

I have one request to make of my Reader, which is, that in judging these Poems he would decide by his own feelings genuinely, and not by reflection upon what will probably be the judgment of others. How common is it to hear a person say, "I myself do not object to this style of composition or this or that expression, but to such and such classes of people it will appear mean or ludicrous." This mode of criticism so destructive of all sound unadulterated judgment is almost universal: I have therefore to request that the Reader would abide independently by his own feelings, and that if he finds himself affected he would not suffer such conjectures to interfere with his pleasure.

If an Author by any single composition has impressed us with respect for his talents, it is useful to consider this as affording a presumption, that, on other occasions where we have been displeased, he nevertheless may not have written ill or absurdly; and, further, to give him so much credit for this one composition as may induce us to review what has displeased us with more care than we should otherwise have bestowed upon it. This is not only an act of justice, but, in our decisions upon poetry especially, may conduce in a high degree to the improvement of our own taste: for an *accurate* taste in Poetry and in all the other arts, as Sir Joshua Reynolds has observed, is an *acquired* talent, which can only be produced by thought and a long continued intercourse with the best models of composition.

This is mentioned not with so ridiculous a purpose as to prevent the most inexperienced Reader from judging for himself, (I have already said that I wish him to judge for himself;) but merely to temper the rashness of decision, and to suggest that if Poetry be a subject on which much time has not been bestowed, the judgment may be erroneous, and that in many cases it necessarily will be so.

I know that nothing would have so effectually contributed to further the end which I have in view as to have shewn of what kind the pleasure is, and how the pleasure is produced which is confessedly produced by metrical composition essentially different from what I have here endeavoured to recommend; for the Reader will say that he has been pleased by such composition and what can I do more for him? The power of any art is limited and he will suspect that if I propose to furnish him with new friends it is only upon condition of his abandoning his old friends. Besides, as I have said, the Reader is himself conscious of the pleasure which he has received from such composition, composition to which he has peculiarly attached the endearing name of Poetry; and all men feel an habitual gratitude, and something of an honorable bigotry, for the objects which have long continued to please them: we not only wish to be pleased, but to be pleased in that particular way in which we have been accustomed to be pleased. There is a host of arguments in these feelings; and I should be the less able to combat them successfully, as I am willing to allow, that, in order entirely to enjoy the Poetry which I am recommending, it would be necessary to give up much of what is ordinarily enjoyed. But would my limits have permitted me to point out how this pleasure is produced, I might have removed many obstacles, and assisted my Reader in perceiving that the powers of language are not so limited as he may suppose; and that it is possible that poetry may give other enjoyments, of a purer, more lasting, and more exquisite nature. But this part of my subject I have been obliged altogether to omit: as it has been less my present aim to prove that the interest excited by some other kinds of poetry is less vivid, and less worthy of the nobler powers of the mind, than to offer reasons for presuming, that, if the object which I have proposed to myself were adequately attained, a species of poetry would be produced, which is genuine poetry; in its nature well adapted to interest mankind permanently, and likewise important in the multiplicity and quality of its moral relations.

From what has been said, and from a perusal of the Poems, the

Reader will be able clearly to perceive the object which I have proposed to myself: he will determine how far I have attained this object; and, what is a much more important question, whether it be worth attaining; and upon the decision of these two questions will rest my claim to the approbation of the public.

Note

To *THE THORN*, 1800

THIS Poem ought to have been preceded by an introductory Poem, which I have been prevented from writing by never having felt myself in a mood when it was probable that I should write it well.—The character which I have here introduced speaking is sufficiently common. The Reader will perhaps have a general notion of it, if he has ever known a man, a Captain of a small trading vessel for example, who being past the middle age of life, had retired upon an annuity or small independent income to some village or country town of which he was not a native, or in which he had not been accustomed to live. Such men having little to do become credulous and talkative from indolence; and from the same cause, and other predisposing causes by which it is probable that such men may have been affected, they are prone to superstition. On which account it appeared to me proper to select a character like this to exhibit some of the general laws by which superstition acts upon the mind. Superstitious men are almost always men of slow faculties and deep feelings; their minds are not loose but adhesive; they have a reasonable share of imagination, by which word I mean the faculty which produces impressive effects out of simple elements; but they are utterly destitute of fancy, the power by which pleasure and surprize are excited by sudden varieties of situation and by accumulated imagery.

It was my wish in this poem to shew the manner in which such men cleave to the same ideas; and to follow the turns of passion, always different, yet not palpably different, by which their conversation is swayed. I had two objects to attain; first, to represent a picture which should not be unimpressive yet consistent with the character that should describe it, secondly, while I adhered to the style in which such persons describe, to take care that words, which in their minds are impregnated with passion, should likewise convey

passion to Readers who are not accustomed to sympathize with men feeling in that manner or using such language. It seemed to me that this might be done by calling in the assistance of Lyrical and rapid Metre. It was necessary that the Poem, to be natural, should in reality move slowly; yet I hoped, that, by the aid of the metre, to those who should at all enter into the spirit of the Poem, it would appear to move quickly. The Reader will have the kindness to excuse this note as I am sensible that an introductory Poem is necessary to give this Poem its full effect.

Upon this occasion I will request permission to add a few words closely connected with THE THORN and many other Poems in these Volumes. There is a numerous class of readers who imagine that the same words cannot be repeated without tautology: this is a great error: virtual tautology is much oftener produced by using different words when the meaning is exactly the same. Words, a Poet's words more particularly, ought to be weighed in the balance of feeling and not measured by the space which they occupy upon paper. For the Reader cannot be too often reminded that Poetry is passion: it is the history or science of feelings: now every man must know that an attempt is rarely made to communicate impassioned feelings without something of an accompanying consciousness of the inadequateness of our own powers, or the deficiencies of language. During such efforts there will be a craving in the mind, and as long as it is unsatisfied the Speaker will cling to the same words, or words of the same character. There are also various other reasons why repetition and apparent tautology are frequently beauties of the highest kind. Among the chief of these reasons is the interest which the mind attaches to words, not only as symbols of the passion, but as *things*, active and efficient, which are of themselves part of the passion. And further, from a spirit of fondness, exultation, and gratitude, the mind luxuriates in the repetition of words which appear successfully to communicate its feelings. The truth of these remarks might be shewn by innumerable passages from the Bible and from the impassioned poetry of every nation.

"Awake, awake, Deborah: awake, awake, utter a song: Arise Barak, and lead thy captivity captive, thou Son of Abinoam.

At her feet he bowed, he fell, he lay down: at her feet he bowed, he fell; where he bowed there he fell down dead.

Why is his Chariot so long in coming? Why tarry the Wheels of his Chariot?"—Judges, Chap. 5th, Verses 12th, 27th, and part of 28th.—See also the whole of that tumultuous and wonderful Poem.

Appendix

TO LYRICAL BALLADS, 1802

As perhaps I have no right to expect from a Reader of an introduction to a volume of Poems that attentive perusal without which it is impossible, imperfectly as I have been compelled to express my meaning, that what I have said in the Preface should throughout be fully understood, I am the more anxious to give an exact notion of the sense in which I use the phrase *poetic diction*; and for this purpose I will here add a few words concerning the origin of the phraseology which I have condemned under that name. The earliest Poets of all nations generally wrote from passion excited by real events; they wrote naturally, and as men: feeling powerfully as they did, their language was daring, and figurative. In succeeding times, Poets, and men ambitious of the fame of Poets, perceiving the influence of such language, and desirous of producing the same effect, without having the same animating passion, set themselves to a mechanical adoption of those figures of speech, and made use of them, sometimes with propriety, but much more frequently applied them to feelings and ideas with which they had no natural connection whatsoever. A language was thus insensibly produced, differing materially from the real language of men in *any situation*. The Reader or Hearer of this distorted language found himself in a perturbed and unusual state of mind: when affected by the genuine language of passion he had been in a perturbed and unusual state of mind also: in both cases he was willing that his common judgment and understanding should be laid asleep, and he had no instinctive and infallible perception of the true to make him reject the false; the one served as a passport for the other. The agitation and confusion of mind were in both cases delightful, and no wonder if he confounded the one with the other, and believed them both to be produced by the same, or similar causes. Besides, the Poet spake to him in the character of a man to be looked up to, a man of genius and authority. Thus, and from a variety of other causes, this distorted language was received with admiration; and Poets, it is probable, who had before contented themselves for the most part with misapplying only expressions which at first had been dictated by real passion, carried the abuse still further, and introduced phrases composed apparently in the spirit of the original figurative

language of passion, yet altogether of their own invention, and distinguished by various degrees of wanton deviation from good sense and nature.

It is indeed true that the language of the earliest Poets was felt to differ materially from ordinary language, because it was the language of extraordinary occasions; but it was really spoken by men, language which the Poet himself had uttered when he had been affected by the events which he described, or which he had heard uttered by those around him. To this language it is probable that metre of some sort or other was early superadded. This separated the genuine language of Poetry still further from common life, so that whoever read or heard the poems of these earliest Poets felt himself moved in a way in which he had not been accustomed to be moved in real life, and by causes manifestly different from those which acted upon him in real life. This was the great temptation to all the corruptions which have followed: under the protection of this feeling succeeding Poets constructed a phraseology which had one thing, it is true, in common with the genuine language of poetry, namely, that it was not heard in ordinary conversation; that it was unusual. But the first Poets, as I have said, spake a language which, though unusual, was still the language of men. This circumstance, however, was disregarded by their successors; they found that they could please by easier means: they became proud of a language which they themselves had invented, and which was uttered only by themselves; and, with the spirit of a fraternity, they arrogated it to themselves as their own. In process of time metre became a symbol or promise of this unusual language, and whoever took upon him to write in metre, according as he possessed more or less of true poetic genius, introduced less or more of this adulterated phraseology into his compositions, and the true and the false became so inseparably interwoven that the taste of men was gradually perverted; and this language was received as a natural language; and, at length, by the influence of books upon men, did to a certain degree really become so. Abuses of this kind were imported from one nation to another, and with the progress of refinement this diction became daily more and more corrupt, thrusting out of sight the plain humanities of nature by a motley masquerade of tricks, quaintnesses, hieroglyphics, and enigmas.

It would be highly interesting to point out the causes of the pleasure given by this extravagant and absurd language; but this is not the place; it depends upon a great variety of causes, but upon

none perhaps more than its influence in impressing a notion of the peculiarity and exaltation of the Poet's character, and in flattering the Reader's self-love by bringing him nearer to a sympathy with that character; an effect which is accomplished by unsettling ordinary habits of thinking, and thus assisting the Reader to approach to that perturbed and dizzy state of mind in which if he does not find himself, he imagines that he is *balked* of a peculiar enjoyment which poetry can and ought to bestow.

The sonnet which I have quoted from Gray, in the Preface, except the lines printed in Italics, consists of little else but this diction, though not of the worst kind; and indeed, if I may be permitted to say so, it is far too common in the best writers, both antient and modern. Perhaps I can in no way, by positive example, more easily give my Reader a notion of what I mean by the phrase *poetic diction* than by referring him to a comparison between the metrical paraphrases which we have of passages in the old and new Testament, and those passages as they exist in our common Translation. See Pope's "Messiah" throughout, Prior's "Did sweeter sounds adorn my flowing tongue," &c., &c. "Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels," &c., &c. See 1st Corinthians, Chapter 13th. By way of immediate example, take the following of Dr. Johnson.

Turn on the prudent Ant thy heedless eyes,
Observe her labours, Sluggard, and be wise;
No stern command, no monitory voice,
Prescribes her duties, or directs her choice;
Yet timely provident she hastes away,
To snatch the blessings of a plenteous day;
When fruitful Summer loads the teeming plain,
She crops the harvest and she stores the grain.
How long shall sloth usurp thy useless hours,
Unnerve thy vigour, and enchain thy powers?
While artful shades thy downy couch enclose,
And soft solicitation courts repose,
Amidst the drowsy charms of dull delight,
Year chases year with unremitted flight,
Till want now following, fraudulent and slow,
Shall spring to seize thee, like an ambushed foe.

From this hubbub of words pass to the original. "Go to the Ant, thou Sluggard, consider her ways, and be wise: which having no guide, overseer, or ruler, provideth her meat in the summer, and gathereth her food in the harvest. How long wilt thou sleep, O Sluggard? when wilt thou arise out of thy sleep? Yet a little sleep,

a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep. So shall thy poverty come as one that travaileth, and thy want as an armed man." Proverbs, chap. 6th.

One more quotation and I have done. It is from Cowper's verses supposed to be written by Alexander Selkirk.

Religion! what treasure untold
Resides in that heavenly word!
More precious than silver and gold,
Or all that this earth can afford.
But the sound of the church-going bell
These valleys and rocks never heard,
Ne'er sigh'd at the sound of a knell,
Or smil'd when a sabbath appear'd.

Ye winds that have made me your sport,
Convey to this desolate shore
Some cordial endearing report
Of a land I must visit no more.
My Friends, do they now and then send
A wish or a thought after me?
O tell me I yet have a friend,
Though a friend I am never to see.

. I have quoted this passage as an instance of three different styles of composition. The first four lines are poorly expressed; some Critics would call the language prosaic; the fact is, it would be bad prose, so bad, that it is scarcely worse in metre. The epithet "church-going" applied to a bell, and that by so chaste a writer as Cowper, is an instance of the strange abuses which Poets have introduced into their language till they and their Readers take them as matters of course, if they do not single them out expressly as objects of admiration. The two lines "Ne'er sighed at the sound," &c., are, in my opinion, an instance of the language of passion wrested from its proper use, and, from the mere circumstance of the composition being in metre, applied upon an occasion that does not justify such violent expressions, and I should condemn the passage, though perhaps few Readers will agree with me, as vicious poetic diction. The last stanza is throughout admirably expressed: it would be equally good whether in prose or verse, except that the Reader has an exquisite pleasure in seeing such natural language so naturally connected with metre. The beauty of this stanza tempts me here to add a sentiment which ought to be the pervading spirit of a system, detached parts of which have been imperfectly explained

in the Preface, namely, that in proportion as ideas and feelings are valuable, whether the composition be in prose or in verse, they require and exact one and the same language.

Dedication

OF POEMS, 1815

TO SIR GEORGE HOWLAND BEAUMONT, BART.

My dear Sir George,

ACCEPT my thanks for the permission given me to dedicate these Volumes to you.—In addition to a lively pleasure derived from general considerations, I feel, upon this occasion, a particular satisfaction; for by inscribing these Poems with your Name, I seem to myself in some degree to repay, by an appropriate honour, the great obligation which I owe to one part of the Collection—as having been the means of first making us personally known to each other. Upon much of the remainder, also, you have a peculiar claim,—for several of the best pieces were composed under the shade of your own groves, upon the classic ground of Coleorton; where I was animated by the recollection of those illustrious Poets, of your Name and Family, who were born in that neighbourhood; and, we may be assured, did not wander with indifference by the dashing stream of Grace-dieu, and among the rocks that diversify the forest of Charnwood.—Nor is there any one to whom such parts of this Collection as have been inspired or coloured by the beautiful Country from which I now address you, could be presented with more propriety than to yourself—who have composed so many admirable Pictures from the suggestions of the same scenery. Early in life, the sublimity and beauty of this Region excited your admiration; and I know that you are bound to it in mind by a still-strengthening attachment.

Wishing and hoping that this Work, with the embellishments it has received from your Pencil, may survive as a lasting memorial of a friendship, which I reckon among the blessings of my life,

I have the honour to be,

My dear Sir George,

Yours most affectionately and faithfully,

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH.

Rydal Mount, Westmoreland,

February 1, 1815.

Preface

TO POEMS, 1815

THE observations prefixed to that portion of these Volumes, which was published many years ago, under the title of "Lyrical Ballads," have so little of a special application to the greater part, perhaps, of this collection, as subsequently enlarged and diversified, that they could not with any propriety stand as an Introduction to it. Not deeming it, however, expedient to suppress that exposition, slight and imperfect as it is, of the feelings which had determined the choice of the subjects, and the principles which had regulated the composition of those Pieces, I have transferred it to the end of the second Volume, to be attended to, or not, at the pleasure of the Reader.

In the Preface to that part of "The Recluse," lately published under the title of "The Excursion," I have alluded to a meditated arrangement of my minor Poems, which should assist the attentive Reader in perceiving their connection with each other, and also their subordination to that Work. I shall here say a few words explanatory of this arrangement, as carried into effect in the present Volumes.

The powers requisite for the production of poetry are, first, those of observation and description, i.e. the ability to observe with accuracy things as they are in themselves, and with fidelity to describe them, unmodified by any passion or feeling existing in the mind of the Describer: whether the things depicted be actually present to the senses, or have a place only in the memory. This power, though indispensable to a Poet, is one which he employs only in submission to necessity, and never for a continuance of time; as its exercise supposes all the higher qualities of the mind to be passive, and in a state of subjection to external objects, much in the same way as the Translator or Engraver ought to be to his Original. 2ndly, Sensibility,—which, the more exquisite it is, the wider will be the range of a Poet's perceptions; and the more will he be incited to observe objects, both as they exist in themselves and as re-acted upon by his own mind. (The distinction between poetic and human sensibility has been marked in the character of the Poet delineated in the original preface, before-mentioned.) 3rdly, Reflection,—which makes the Poet acquainted with the value of actions, images, thoughts, and feelings; and assists the sensibility in perceiving their

connection with each other. 4thly, Imagination and Fancy,—to modify, to create, and to associate. 5thly, Invention,—by which characters are composed out of materials supplied by observation; whether of the Poet's own heart and mind, or of external life and nature; and such incidents and situations produced as are most impressive to the imagination, and most fitted to do justice to the characters, sentiments, and passions, which the Poet undertakes to illustrate. And, lastly, Judgment,—to decide how and where, and in what degree, each of these faculties ought to be exerted; so that the less shall not be sacrificed to the greater; nor the greater, slighting the less, arrogate, to its own injury, more than its due. By judgment, also, is determined what are the laws and appropriate graces of every species of composition.

The materials of Poetry, by these powers collected and produced, are cast, by means of various moulds, into divers forms. The moulds may be enumerated, and the forms specified, in the following order. 1st, the Narrative,—including the Epopœia, the Historic Poem, the Tale, the Romance, the Mock-heroic, and, if the spirit of Homer will tolerate such neighbourhood, that dear production of our days, the metrical Novel. Of this Class, the distinguishing mark is, that the Narrator, however liberally his speaking agents be introduced, is himself the source from which every thing primarily flows. Epic Poets, in order that their mode of composition may accord with the elevation of their subject, represent themselves as *singing* from the inspiration of the Muse, *Arma virumque cano*; but this is a fiction, in modern times, of slight value: the Iliad or the Paradise Lost would gain little in our estimation by being chaunted. The other poets who belong to this class are commonly content to *tell* their tale;—so that of the whole it may be affirmed that they neither require nor reject the accompaniment of music.

2ndly, The Dramatic,—consisting of Tragedy, Historic Drama, Comedy, and Masque; in which the poet does not appear at all in his own person, and where the whole action is carried on by speech and dialogue of the agents; music being admitted only incidentally and rarely. The Opera may be placed here, in as much as it proceeds by dialogue; though depending, to the degree that it does, upon music, it has a strong claim to be ranked with the Lyrical. The characteristic and impassioned Epistle, of which Ovid and Pope have given examples, considered as a species of monodrama, may, without impropriety, be placed in this class.

3rdly, The Lyrical,—containing the Hymn, the Ode, the Elegy, the Song, and the Ballad; in all which, for the production of their *full* effect, an accompaniment of music is indispensable.

4thly, The Idyllium,—descriptive chiefly either of the processes and appearances of external nature, as the “Seasons” of Thomson; or of characters, manners, and sentiments, as are Shenstone’s *School-mistress*, *The Cotter’s Saturday Night* of Burns, *The Twa Dogs* of the same Author; or of these in conjunction with the appearances of Nature, as most of the pieces of Theocritus, the *Allegro* and *Penseroso* of Milton, Beattie’s *Minstrel*, Goldsmith’s “*Deserted Village*.” The Epitaph, the Inscription, the Sonnet, most of the epistles of poets writing in their own persons, and all loco-descriptive poetry, belong to this class.

5thly, Didactic,—the principal object of which is direct instruction; as the Poem of Lucretius, the *Georgics* of Virgil, “the *Fleece*” of Dyer, Mason’s “*English Garden*,” &c.

And, lastly, philosophical satire, like that of Horace and Juvenal; personal and occasional Satire rarely comprehending sufficient of the general in the individual to be dignified with the name of Poetry.

Out of the three last classes has been constructed a composite species, of which Young’s *Night Thoughts* and Cowper’s *Task* are excellent examples.

It is deducible from the above, that poems, apparently miscellaneous, may with propriety be arranged either with reference to the powers of mind *predominant* in the production of them; or to the mould in which they are cast; or, lastly, to the subjects to which they relate. From each of these considerations, the following Poems have been divided into classes; which, that the work may more obviously correspond with the course of human life, [and] for the sake of exhibiting in it the three requisites of a legitimate whole, a beginning, a middle, and an end, have been also arranged, as far as it was possible, according to an order of time, commencing with Childhood, and terminating with Old Age, Death, and Immortality. My guiding wish was, that the small pieces of which these volumes consist, thus discriminated, might be regarded under a two-fold view; as composing an entire work within themselves, and as adjuncts to the philosophical Poem, “*The Recluse*.” This arrangement has long presented itself habitually to my own mind. Nevertheless, I should have preferred to scatter the contents of these volumes at random, if I had been persuaded that, by the plan

adopted, any thing material would be taken from the natural effect of the pieces, individually, on the mind of the unreflecting Reader. I trust there is a sufficient variety in each class to prevent this; while, for him who reads with reflection, the arrangement will serve as a commentary unostentatiously directing his attention to my purposes, both particular and general. But, as I wish to guard against the possibility of misleading by this classification, it is proper first to remind the Reader, that certain poems are placed according to the powers of mind, in the Author's conception, predominant in the production of them; *predominant*, which implies the exertion of other faculties in less degree. Where there is more imagination than fancy in a poem it is placed under the head of imagination, and vice versâ. Both the above Classes might without impropriety have been enlarged from that consisting of "Poems founded on the Affections;" as might this latter from those, and from the class "Proceeding from Sentiment and Reflection." The most striking characteristics of each piece, mutual illustration, variety, and proportion, have governed me throughout.

It may be proper in this place to state, that the Extracts in the 2nd Class entitled "Juvenile Pieces" are in many places altered from the printed copy, chiefly by omission and compression. The slight alterations of another kind were for the most part made not long after the publication of the Poems from which the Extracts are taken. These Extracts seem to have a title to be placed here as they were the productions of youth, and represent implicitly some of the features of a youthful mind, at a time when images of nature supplied to it the place of thought, sentiment, and almost of action; or, as it will be found expressed, of a state of mind when

"the sounding cataract
 Haunted me like a passion: the tall rock,
 The mountain, and the deep and gloomy wood,
 Their colours and their forms were then to me
 An appetite, a feeling and a love,
 That had no need of a remoter charm,
 By thought supplied, or any interest
 Unborrowed from the eye"—

I will own that I was much at a loss what to select of these descriptions; and perhaps it would have been better either to have reprinted the whole, or suppressed what I have given.

None of the other Classes, except those of Fancy and Imagination, require any particular notice. But a remark of general

application may be made. All Poets, except the dramatic, have been in the practice of feigning that their works were composed to the music of the harp or lyre: with what degree of affectation this has been done in modern times, I leave to the judicious to determine. For my own part, I have not been disposed to violate probability so far, or to make such a large demand upon the Reader's charity. Some of these pieces are essentially lyrical; and, therefore, cannot have their due force without a supposed musical accompaniment; but, in much the greatest part, as a substitute for the classic lyre or romantic harp, I require nothing more than an animated or impassioned recitation, adapted to the subject. Poems, however humble in their kind, if they be good in that kind, cannot read themselves: the law of long syllable and short must not be so inflexible—the letter of metre must not be so impassive to the spirit of versification—as to deprive the Reader of a voluntary power to modulate, in subordination to the sense, the music of the poem;—in the same manner as his mind is left at liberty, and even summoned, to act upon its thoughts and images. But, though the accompaniment of a musical instrument be frequently dispensed with, the true Poet does not therefore abandon his privilege distinct from that of the mere Proseman;

“He murmurs near the running brooks
A music sweeter than their own.”

I come now to the consideration of the words Fancy and Imagination, as employed in the classification of the following Poems. “A man,” says an intelligent Author, “has imagination, in proportion as he can distinctly copy in idea the impressions of sense: it is the faculty which *images* within the mind the phenomena of sensation. A man has fancy in proportion as he can call up, connect, or associate, at pleasure, those internal images (*φαντάζειν* is to cause to appear) so as to complete ideal representations of absent objects. Imagination is the power of depicting, and fancy of evoking and combining. The imagination is formed by patient observation; the fancy by a voluntary activity in shifting the scenery of the mind. The more accurate the imagination, the more safely may a painter, or a poet, undertake a delineation, or a description, without the presence of the objects to be characterized. The more versatile the fancy, the more original and striking will be the decorations produced.”—*British Synonyms discriminated*, by W. Taylor.

Is not this as if a man should undertake to supply an account of a building, and be so intent upon what he had discovered of the foundation as to conclude his task without once looking up at the superstructure? Here, as in other instances throughout the volume, the judicious Author's mind is enthralled by Etymology; he takes up the original word as his guide, his conductor, his escort, and too often does not perceive how soon he becomes its prisoner, without liberty to tread in any path but that to which it confines him. It is not easy to find out how imagination, thus explained, differs from distinct remembrance of images; or fancy from quick and vivid recollection of them: each is nothing more than a mode of memory. If the two words bear the above meaning, and no other, what term is left to designate that Faculty of which the Poet is "all compact;" he whose eye glances from earth to heaven, whose spiritual attributes body forth what his pen is prompt in turning to shape; or what is left to characterise fancy, as insinuating herself into the heart of objects with creative activity?—Imagination, in the sense of the word as giving title to a Class of the following Poems, has no reference to images that are merely a faithful copy, existing in the mind, of absent external objects; but is a word of higher import, denoting operations of the mind upon those objects, and processes of creation or of composition, governed by certain fixed laws. I proceed to illustrate my meaning by instances. A parrot *hangs* from the wires of his cage by his beak or by his claws; or a monkey from the bough of a tree by his paws or his tail. Each creature does so literally and actually. In the first Eclogue of Virgil, the Shepherd, thinking of the time when he is to take leave of his Farm, thus addresses his goats:

"Non ego vos posthac viridi projectus in antro
Dumosa *pendere* procul de rupe videbo."

—————"half way down
Hangs one who gathers samphire,"

is the well-known expression of Shakespear, delineating an ordinary image upon the Cliffs of Dover. In these two instances is a slight exertion of the faculty which I denominate imagination, in the use of one word: neither the goats nor the samphire-gatherer do literally hang, as does the parrot or the monkey; but, presenting to the senses something of such an appearance, the mind in its activity, for its own gratification, contemplates them as hanging.

"As when far off at Sea a Fleet descried
Hangs in the clouds, by equinoxial winds
 Close sailing from Bengala or the Isles
 Of Ternate or Tydore, whence Merchants bring
 Their spicy drugs; they on the trading flood
 Through the wide Ethiopian to the Cape
 Ply, stemming nightly toward the Pole: so seem'd
 Far off the flying Fiend."

Here is the full strength of the imagination involved in the word, *hangs*, and exerted upon the whole image: First, the Fleet, an aggregate of many Ships, is represented as one mighty Person, whose track, we know and feel, is upon the waters; but, taking advantage of its appearance to the senses, the Poet dares to represent it as *hanging in the clouds*, both for the gratification of the mind in contemplating the image itself, and in reference to the motion and appearance of the sublime object to which it is compared.

From images of sight we will pass to those of sound:

"Over his own sweet voice the Stock-dove *broods*;"
 of the same bird,

"His voice was *buried* among trees,
 Yet to be come at by the breeze;"

"O, Cuckoo! shall I call thee *Bird*,
 Or but a wandering *Voice*?"

The stock-dove is said to *coo*, a sound well imitating the note of the bird; but, by the intervention of the metaphor *broods*, the affections are called in by the imagination to assist in marking the manner in which the Bird reiterates and prolongs her soft note, as if herself delighting to listen to it, and participating of a still and quiet satisfaction, like that which may be supposed inseparable from the continuous process of incubation. "His voice was buried among trees," a metaphor expressing the love of *seclusion* by which this Bird is marked; and characterising its note as not partaking of the shrill and the piercing, and therefore more easily deadened by the intervening shade; yet a note so peculiar, and withal so pleasing, that the breeze, gifted with that love of the sound which the Poet feels, penetrates the shade in which it is entombed, and conveys it to the ear of the listener.

"Shall I call thee Bird,
 Or but a wandering Voice?"

This concise interrogation characterises the seeming ubiquity of the voice of the Cuckoo, and dispossesses the creature almost of a

corporeal existence; the imagination being tempted to this exertion of her power by a consciousness in the memory that the Cuckoo is almost perpetually heard throughout the season of Spring, but seldom becomes an object of sight.

Thus far of images independent of each other, and immediately endowed by the mind with properties that do not inhere in them, upon an incitement from properties and qualities the existence of which is inherent and obvious. These processes of imagination are carried on either by conferring additional properties upon an object, or abstracting from it some of those which it actually possesses, and thus enabling it to react upon the mind which hath performed the process, like a new existence.

I pass from the Imagination acting upon an individual image to a consideration of the same faculty employed upon images in a conjunction by which they modify each other. The Reader has already had a fine instance before him in the passage quoted from Virgil, where the apparently perilous situation of the Goat, hanging upon the shaggy precipice, is contrasted with that of the Shepherd, contemplating it from the seclusion of the Cavern in which he lies stretched at ease and in security. Take these images separately, and how unaffecting the picture compared with that produced by their being thus connected with, and opposed to, each other!

“As a huge Stone is sometimes seen to lie
Couched on the bald top of an eminence,
Wonder to all who do the same espy
By what means it could thither come, and whence;
So that it seems a thing endued with sense,
Like a Sea-beast crawled forth, which on a shelf
Of rock or sand repositeth, there to sun himself.

Such seemed this Man; not all alive or dead,
Nor all asleep, in his extreme old age.
Motionless as a cloud the old Man stood,
That heareth not the loud winds when they call,
And moveth altogether if it move at all.”

In these images, the conferring, the abstracting, and the modifying powers of the Imagination, immediately and mediately acting, are all brought into conjunction. The Stone is endowed with something of the power of life to approximate it to the Sea-beast; and the Sea-beast stripped of some of its vital qualities to assimilate it to the stone; which intermediate image is thus treated for the purpose of bringing the original image, that of the stone, to a nearer resem-

blance to the figure and condition of the aged Man; who is divested of so much of the indications of life and motion as to bring him to the point where the two objects unite and coalesce in just comparison. After what has been said, the image of the Cloud need not be commented upon.

Thus far of an endowing or modifying power: but the Imagination also shapes and *creates*; and how? By innumerable processes; and in none does it more delight than in that of consolidating numbers into unity, and dissolving and separating unity into number,—alternations proceeding from, and governed by, a sublime consciousness of the soul in her own mighty and almost divine powers. Recur to the passage already cited from Milton. When the compact Fleet, as one Person, has been introduced “Sailing from Bengala,” “They,” *i.e.* the “Merchants,” representing the Fleet resolved into a Multitude of Ships, “ply” their voyage towards the extremities of the earth: “So” (referring to the word “As” in the commencement) “seemed the flying Fiend;” the image of his Person acting to recombine the multitude of Ships into one body,—the point from which the comparison set out. “So seemed,” and to whom seemed? To the heavenly Muse who dictates the poem, to the eye of the Poet’s mind, and to that of the Reader, present at one moment in the wide Ethiopian, and the next in the solitudes, then first broken in upon, of the infernal regions!

“Modo me Thebis, modo ponit Athenis.”

Hear again this mighty Poet,—speaking of the Messiah going forth to expel from Heaven the rebellious Angels,

“Attended by ten thousand, thousand Saints
He onward came: far off his coming shone,—

the retinue of Saints, and the Person of the Messiah himself, lost almost and merged in the splendour of that indefinite abstraction, “His coming!”

As I do not mean here to treat this subject further than to throw some light upon the present Volumes, and especially upon one division of them, I shall spare myself and the Reader the trouble of considering the Imagination as it deals with thoughts and sentiments, as it regulates the composition of characters, and determines the course of actions: I will not consider it (more than I have already done by implication) as that power which, in the language of one of my most esteemed Friends, “draws all things to one, which makes

things animate or inanimate, beings with their attributes, subjects with their accessories, take one colour and serve to one effect.”¹ The grand store-house of enthusiastic and meditative Imagination, of poetical, as contradistinguished from human and dramatic Imagination, is the prophetic and lyrical parts of the holy Scriptures, and the works of Milton, to which I cannot forbear to add those of Spenser. I select these writers in preference to those of ancient Greece and Rome because the anthropomorphism of the Pagan religion subjected the minds of the greatest poets in those countries too much to the bondage of definite form; from which the Hebrews were preserved by their abhorrence of idolatry. This abhorrence was almost as strong in our great epic Poet, both from circumstances of his life, and from the constitution of his mind. However imbued the surface might be with classical literature, he was a Hebrew in soul; and all things tended in him towards the sublime. Spenser, of a gentler nature, maintained his freedom by aid of his allegorical spirit, at one time inciting him to create persons out of abstractions; and at another, by a superior effort of genius, to give the universality and permanence of abstractions to his human beings, by means of attributes and emblems that belong to the highest moral truths and the purest sensations,—of which his character of Una is a glorious example. Of the human and dramatic Imagination the works of Shakespear are an inexhaustible source.

“I tax not you, ye Elements, with unkindness,
I never gave you Kingdoms, called you Daughters.”

And if, bearing in mind the many Poets distinguished by this prime quality, whose names I omit to mention; yet justified by a recollection of the insults which the Ignorant, the Incapable, and the Presumptuous have heaped upon these and my other writings, I may be permitted to anticipate the judgment of posterity upon myself; I shall declare (censurable, I grant, if the notoriety of the fact above stated does not justify me) that I have given, in these unfavourable times, evidence of exertions of this faculty upon its worthiest objects, the external universe, the moral and religious sentiments of Man, his natural affections, and his acquired passions; which have the same ennobling tendency as the productions of men, in this kind, worthy to be holden in undying remembrance.

I dismiss this subject with observing—that, in the series of

¹ Charles Lamb upon the genius of Hogarth.

Poems placed under the head of Imagination, I have begun with one of the earliest processes of Nature in the development of this faculty. Guided by one of my own primary consciousnesses, I have represented a commutation and transfer of internal feelings, co-operating with external accidents to plant, for immortality, images of sound and sight, in the celestial soil of the Imagination. The Boy, there introduced, is listening, with something of a feverish and restless anxiety, for the recurrence of the riotous sounds which he had previously excited; and, at the moment when the intenseness of his mind is beginning to remit, he is surprised into a perception of the solemn and tranquillizing images which the Poem describes.—The Poems next in succession exhibit the faculty exerting itself upon various objects of the external universe; then follow others, where it is employed upon feelings, characters, and actions; and the Class is concluded with imaginative pictures of moral, political, and religious sentiments.

To the mode in which Fancy has already been characterized as the Power of evoking and combining, or, as my friend Mr. Coleridge has styled it, “the aggregative and associative Power,” my objection is only that the definition is too general. To aggregate and to associate, to evoke and to combine, belong as well to the Imagination as to the Fancy; but either the materials evoked and combined are different; or they are brought together under a different law, and for a different purpose. Fancy does not require that the materials which she makes use of should be susceptible of change in their constitution, from her touch; and, where they admit of modification, it is enough for her purpose if it be slight, limited, and evanescent. Directly the reverse of these, are the desires and demands of the Imagination. She recoils from every thing but the plastic, the pliant, and the indefinite. She leaves it to Fancy to describe Queen Mab as coming,

“In shape no bigger than an agate stone
On the fore-finger of an Alderman.”

Having to speak of stature, she does not tell you that her gigantic Angel was as tall as Pompey’s Pillar; much less that he was twelve cubits, or twelve hundred cubits high; or that his dimensions equalled those of Teneriffe or Atlas;—because these, and if they were a million times as high, it would be the same, are bounded: The expression is, “His stature reached the sky!” the illimitable firmament!—When the Imagination frames a comparison, if it does

not strike on the first presentation, a sense of the truth of the likeness, from the moment that it is perceived, grows—and continues to grow—upon the mind; the resemblance depending less upon outline of form and feature than upon expression and effect, less upon casual and outstanding, than upon inherent and internal, properties:—moreover, the images invariably modify each other.—The law under which the processes of Fancy are carried on is as capricious as the accidents of things, and the effects are surprizing, playful, ludicrous, amusing, tender, or pathetic, as the objects happen to be appositely produced or fortunately combined. Fancy depends upon the rapidity and profusion with which she scatters her thoughts and images, trusting that their number, and the felicity with which they are linked together, will make amends for the want of individual value: or she prides herself upon the curious subtilty and the successful elaboration with which she can detect their lurking affinities. If she can win you over to her purpose, and impart to you her feelings, she cares not how unstable or transitory may be her influence, knowing that it will not be out of her power to resume it upon an apt occasion. But the Imagination is conscious of an indestructible dominion;—the Soul may fall away from it, not being able to sustain its grandeur, but, if once felt and acknowledged, by no act of any other faculty of the mind can it be relaxed, impaired, or diminished.—Fancy is given to quicken and to beguile the temporal part of our Nature, Imagination to incite and to support the eternal.—Yet is it not the less true that Fancy, as she is an active, is also, under her own laws and in her own spirit, a creative faculty. In what manner Fancy ambitiously aims at a rivalry with Imagination, and Imagination stoops to work with the materials of Fancy, might be illustrated from the compositions of all eloquent writers, whether in prose or verse; and chiefly from those of our own Country. Scarcely a page of the impassioned parts of Bishop Taylor's Works can be opened that shall not afford examples.—Referring the Reader to those inestimable Volumes, I will content myself with placing a conceit (ascribed to Lord Chesterfield) in contrast with a passage from the *Paradise Lost*;

“The dews of the evening most carefully shun,
They are the tears of the sky for the loss of the Sun.”

After the transgression of Adam, Milton, with other appearances of sympathizing Nature, thus marks the immediate consequence,

“Sky lowered, and muttering thunder, some sad drops
Wept at completion of the mortal sin.”

The associating link is the same in each instance;—dew or rain, not distinguishable from the liquid substance of tears, are employed as indications of sorrow. A flash of surprize is the effect in the former case, a flash of surprize and nothing more; for the nature of things does not sustain the combination. In the latter, the effects of the act, of which there is this immediate consequence and visible sign, are so momentous that the mind acknowledges the justice and reasonableness of the sympathy in Nature so manifested; and the sky weeps drops of water as if with human eyes, as “Earth had, before, trembled from her entrails, and Nature given a second groan.”

Awe-stricken as I am by contemplating the operations of the mind of this truly divine Poet, I scarcely dare venture to add that “An address to an Infant,” which the Reader will find under the Class of Fancy in the present Volumes, exhibits something of this communion and interchange of instruments and functions between the two powers; and is, accordingly, placed last in the class, as a preparation for that of Imagination which follows.

Finally, I will refer to Cotton’s “Ode upon Winter,” an admirable composition though stained with some peculiarities of the age in which he lived, for a general illustration of the characteristics of Fancy. The middle part of this ode contains a most lively description of the entrance of Winter, with his retinue, as “A palsied King,” and yet a military Monarch,—advancing for conquest with his Army; the several bodies of which, and their arms and equipments, are described with a rapidity of detail, and a profusion of *fanciful* comparisons, which indicate on the part of the Poet extreme activity of intellect, and a correspondent hurry of delightful feeling. He retires from the Foe into his fortress, where

“a magazine
Of sovereign juice is cellared in.
Liquor that will the siege maintain
Should Phœbus ne’er return again.”

Though myself a water-drinker, I cannot resist the pleasure of transcribing what follows, as an instance still more happy of Fancy employed in the treatment of feeling than, in its preceding passages, the Poem supplies of her management of forms.

’Tis that, that gives the Poet rage,
And thaws the gelly’d blood of Age;
Matures the Young, restores the Old,
And makes the fainting Coward bold.

It lays the careful head to rest,
Calms palpitations in the breast,
Renders our lives' misfortune sweet;

Then let the chill Scirocco blow,
And gird us round with hills of snow,
Or else go whistle to the shore,
And make the hollow mountains roar,

Whilst we together jovial sit
Careless, and crown'd with mirth and wit;
Where, though bleak winds confine us home,
Our fancies round the world shall roam.

We'll think of all the Friends we know,
And drink to all worth drinking to;
When having drunk all thine and mine,
We rather shall want healths than wine.

But where Friends fail us, we'll supply
Our friendships with our charity;
Men that remote in sorrows live,
Shall by our lusty Brimmers thrive.

We'll drink the Wanting into Wealth,
And those that languish into health,
The Afflicted into joy; th' Opprest
Into security and rest.

The Worthy in disgrace shall find
Favour return again more kind,
And in restraint who stifled lie,
Shall taste the air of liberty.

The Brave shall triumph in success,
The Lovers shall have Mistresses,
Poor unregarded Virtue, praise,
And the neglected Poet, Bays.

Thus shall our healths do others good,
Whilst we ourselves do all we would;
For, freed from envy and from care,
What would we be but what we are?

It remains that I should express my regret at the necessity of separating my compositions from some beautiful Poems of Mr. Coleridge, with which they have been long associated in publication. The feelings, with which that joint publication was made, have been gratified; its end is answered, and the time is come when considerations of general propriety dictate the separation. Three short pieces (now first published) are the work of a Female Friend; and the

Reader, to whom they may be acceptable, is indebted to me for his pleasure; if any one regard them with dislike, or be disposed to condemn them, let the censure fall upon him, who, trusting in his own sense of their merit and their fitness for the place which they occupy, *extorted* them from the Authoress.

When I sate down to write this preface it was my intention to have made it more comprehensive; but as all that I deem necessary is expressed, I will here detain the reader no longer:—what I have further to remark shall be inserted, by way of interlude, at the close of this Volume.

Essay

SUPPLEMENTARY TO THE PREFACE, 1815

BY this time, I trust that the judicious Reader, who has now first become acquainted with these poems, is persuaded that a very senseless outcry has been raised against them and their Author.—Casually, and very rarely only, do I see any periodical publication, except a daily newspaper; but I am not wholly unacquainted with the spirit in which my most active and persevering Adversaries have maintained their hostility; nor with the impudent falsehoods and base artifices to which they have had recourse. These, as implying a consciousness on their parts that attacks honestly and fairly conducted would be unavailing, could not but have been regarded by me with triumph; had they been accompanied with such display of talents and information as might give weight to the opinions of the Writers, whether favourable or unfavourable. But the ignorance of those who have chosen to stand forth as my enemies, as far as I am acquainted with their enmity, has unfortunately been still more gross than their disingenuousness, and their incompetence more flagrant than their malice. The effect in the eyes of the discerning is indeed ludicrous: yet, contemptible as such men are, in return for the forced compliment paid me by their long-continued notice (which, as I have appeared so rarely before the public, no one can say has been solicited) I entreat them to spare themselves. The lash, which they are aiming at my productions, does, in fact, only fall on phantoms of their own brain; which, I grant, I am innocently instrumental in raising.—By what fatality the orb of my genius (for genius none of them seem to deny me) acts upon these men like the moon upon a certain description of

patients, it would be irksome to inquire; nor would it consist with the respect which I owe myself to take further notice of opponents whom I internally despise.

With the young, of both sexes, Poetry is, like love, a passion; but, for much the greater part of those who have been proud of its power over their minds, a necessity soon arises of breaking the pleasing bondage; or it relaxes of itself;—the thoughts being occupied in domestic cares, or the time engrossed by business. Poetry then becomes only an occasional recreation; while to those whose existence passes away in a course of fashionable pleasure it is a species of luxurious amusement.—In middle and declining age, a scattered number of serious persons resort to poetry, as to religion, for a protection against the pressure of trivial employments, and as a consolation for the afflictions of life. And lastly, there are many, who, having been enamoured of this art in their youth, have found leisure, after youth was spent, to cultivate general literature; in which poetry has continued to be comprehended *as a study*.

Into the above Classes the Readers of poetry may be divided; Critics abound in them all; but from the last only can opinions be collected of absolute value, and worthy to be depended upon, as prophetic of the destiny of a new work. The young, who in nothing can escape delusion, are especially subject to it in their intercourse with poetry. The cause, not so obvious as the fact is unquestionable, is the same as that from which erroneous judgments in this art, in the minds of men of all ages, chiefly proceed; but upon Youth it operates with peculiar force. The appropriate business of poetry (which, nevertheless, if genuine is as permanent as pure science) her appropriate employment, her privilege and her *duty*, is to treat of things not as they *are*, but as they *appear*; not as they exist in themselves, but as they *seem* to exist to the *senses* and to the *passions*. What a world of delusion does this acknowledged principle prepare for the inexperienced! what temptations to go astray are here held forth for those whose thoughts have been little disciplined by the understanding, and whose feelings revolt from the sway of reason!—When a juvenile Reader is in the height of his rapture with some vicious passage, should experience throw in doubts, or common-sense suggest suspicions, a lurking consciousness that the realities of the Muse are but shows, and that her liveliest excitements are raised by transient shocks of conflicting feeling and successive assemblages of contradictory thoughts—is ever at hand to justify extravagance, and to sanction absurdity. But, it may

be asked, as these illusions are unavoidable, and no doubt eminently useful to the mind as a process, what good can be gained by making observations the tendency of which is to diminish the confidence of youth in its feelings, and thus to abridge its innocent and even profitable pleasures? The reproach implied in the question could not be warded off, if Youth were incapable of being delighted with what is truly excellent; or if these errors always terminated of themselves in due season. But, with the majority, though their force be abated, they continue through life. Moreover, the fire of youth is too vivacious an element to be extinguished or damped by a philosophical remark; and, while there is no danger that what has been said will be injurious or painful to the ardent and the confident, it may prove beneficial to those who, being enthusiastic, are, at the same time, modest and ingenuous. The intimation may unite with their own misgivings to regulate their sensibility, and to bring in, sooner than it would otherwise have arrived, a more discreet and sound judgment.

If it should excite wonder that men of ability, in later life, whose understandings have been rendered acute by practice in affairs, should be so easily and so far imposed upon when they happen to take up a new work in verse, this appears to be the cause;—that, having discontinued their attention to poetry, whatever progress may have been made in other departments of knowledge, they have not, as to this art, advanced in true discernment beyond the age of youth. If then a new poem fall in their way, whose attractions are of that kind which would have enraptured them during the heat of youth, the judgment not being improved to a degree that they shall be disgusted, they are dazzled; and prize and cherish the faults for having had power to make the present time vanish before them, and to throw the mind back, as by enchantment, into the happiest season of life. As they read, powers seem to be revived, passions are regenerated, and pleasures restored. The Book was probably taken up after an escape from the burthen of business, and with a wish to forget the world, and all its vexations and anxieties. Having obtained this wish, and so much more, it is natural that they should make report as they have felt.

If Men of mature age, through want of practice, be thus easily beguiled into admiration of absurdities, extravagances, and misplaced ornaments, thinking it proper that their understandings should enjoy a holiday, while they are unbending their minds with verse, it may be expected that such Readers will resemble their

former selves also in strength of prejudice, and an inaptitude to be moved by the unostentatious beauties of a pure style. In the higher poetry, an enlightened Critic chiefly looks for a reflexion of the wisdom of the heart and the grandeur of the imagination. Wherever these appear, simplicity accompanies them; Magnificence herself, when legitimate, depending upon a simplicity of her own, to regulate her ornaments. But it is a well known property of human nature that our estimates are ever governed by comparisons, of which we are conscious with various degrees of distinctness. Is it not, then, inevitable (confining these observations to the effects of style merely) that an eye, accustomed to the glaring hues of diction by which such Readers are caught and excited, will for the most part be rather repelled than attracted by an original Work the coloring of which is disposed according to a pure and refined scheme of harmony? It is in the fine arts as in the affairs of life, no man can *serve* (i.e. obey with zeal and fidelity) two Masters.

As Poetry is most just to its own divine origin when it administers the comforts and breathes the spirit of religion, they who have learned to perceive this truth, and who betake themselves to reading verse for sacred purposes, must be preserved from numerous illusions to which the two Classes of Readers, whom we have been considering, are liable. But, as the mind grows serious from the weight of life, the range of its passions is contracted accordingly; and its sympathies become so exclusive that many species of high excellence wholly escape, or but languidly excite, its notice. Besides, Men who read from religious or moral inclinations, even when the subject is of that kind which they approve, are beset with misconceptions and mistakes peculiar to themselves. Attaching so much importance to the truths which interest them, they are prone to overrate the Authors by whom these truths are expressed and enforced. They come prepared to impart so much passion to the Poet's language, that they remain unconscious how little, in fact, they receive from it. And, on the other hand, religious faith is to him who holds it so momentous a thing, and error appears to be attended with such tremendous consequences, that, if opinions touching upon religion occur which the Reader condemns, he not only cannot sympathize with them however animated the expression, but there is, for the most part, an end put to all satisfaction and enjoyment. Love, if it before existed, is converted into dislike; and the heart of the Reader is set against the Author and his book.—To these excesses, they, who from their professions ought to be the

most guarded against them, are perhaps the most liable; I mean those sects whose religion, being from the calculating understanding, is cold and formal. For when Christianity, the religion of humility, is founded upon the proudest faculty of our nature, what can be expected but contradictions? Accordingly, believers of this cast are at one time contemptuous; at another, being troubled as they are and must be with inward misgivings, they are jealous and suspicious;—and at all seasons, they are under temptation to supply, by the heat with which they defend their tenets, the animation which is wanting to the constitution of the religion itself.

Faith was given to man that his affections, detached from the treasures of time, might be inclined to settle upon those of eternity:—the elevation of his nature, which this habit produces on earth, being to him a presumptive evidence of a future state of existence; and giving him a title to partake of its holiness. The religious man values what he sees chiefly as an “imperfect shadowing forth” of what he is incapable of seeing. The concerns of religion refer to indefinite objects, and are too weighty for the mind to support them without relieving itself by resting a great part of the burthen upon words and symbols. The commerce between Man and his Maker cannot be carried on but by a process where much is represented in little, and the infinite Being accommodates himself to a finite capacity. In all this may be perceived the affinities between religion and poetry;—between religion—making up the deficiencies of reason by faith, and poetry—passionate for the instruction of reason; between religion—whose element is infinitude, and whose ultimate trust is the supreme of things, submitting herself to circumscription and reconciled to substitutions; and poetry—etherial and transcendant, yet incapable to sustain her existence without sensuous incarnation. In this community of nature may be perceived also the lurking incitements of kindred error;—so that we shall find that no poetry has been more subject to distortion, than that species the argument and scope of which is religious; and no lovers of the art have gone further astray than the pious and the devout.

Whither then shall we turn for that union of qualifications which must necessarily exist before the decisions of a critic can be of absolute value? For a mind at once poetical and philosophical; for a critic whose affections are as free and kindly as the spirit of society, and whose understanding is severe as that of dispassionate government? Where are we to look for that initiatory composure of mind which no selfishness can disturb? For a natural sensibility that has

been tutored into correctness without losing any thing of its quickness; and for active faculties capable of answering the demands which an Author of original imagination shall make upon them,—associated with a judgment that cannot be duped into admiration by aught that is unworthy of it?—Among those and those only, who, never having suffered their youthful love of poetry to remit much of its force, have applied, to the consideration of the laws of this art, the best power of their understandings. At the same time it must be observed—that, as this Class comprehends the only judgments which are trust-worthy, so does it include the most erroneous and perverse. For to be mis-taught is worse than to be untaught; and no perverseness equals that which is supported by system, no errors are so difficult to root out as those which the understanding has pledged its credit to uphold. In this Class are contained Censors, who, if they be pleased with what is good, are pleased with it only by imperfect glimpses, and upon false principles; who, should they generalize rightly to a certain point, are sure to suffer for it in the end;—who, if they stumble upon a sound rule, are fettered by mis-applying it, or by straining it too far; being incapable of perceiving when it ought to yield to one of higher order. In it are found Critics too petulant to be passive to a genuine Poet, and too feeble to grapple with him; Men, who take upon them to report of the course which *he* holds whom they are utterly unable to accompany,—confounded if he turn quick upon the wing, dismayed if he soar steadily into “the region;”—Men of palsied imaginations and indurated hearts; in whose minds all healthy action is languid,—who, therefore, feed as the many direct them, or, with the many, are greedy after vicious provocatives;—Judges, whose censure is auspicious, and whose praise ominous! In this Class meet together the two extremes of best and worst.

The observations presented in the foregoing series are of too ungracious a nature to have been made without reluctance; and were it only on this account I would invite the Reader to try them by the test of comprehensive experience. If the number of judges who can be confidently relied upon be in reality so small, it ought to follow that partial notice only, or neglect, perhaps long continued, or attention wholly inadequate to their merits—must have been the fate of most works in the higher departments of poetry; and that, on the other hand, numerous productions have blazed into popularity, and have passed away, leaving scarcely a trace behind them:—it will be, further, found that when Authors have at length raised

themselves into general admiration and maintained their ground, errors and prejudices have prevailed concerning their genius and their works, which the few who are conscious of those errors and prejudices would deplore; if they were not recompensed by perceiving that there are select Spirits for whom it is ordained that their fame shall be in the world an existence like that of Virtue, which owes its being to the struggles it makes, and its vigour to the enemies whom it provokes;—a vivacious quality ever doomed to meet with opposition, and still triumphing over it; and, from the nature of its dominion, incapable of being brought to the sad conclusion of Alexander, when he wept that there were no more worlds for him to conquer.

Let us take a hasty retrospect of the poetical literature of this Country for greater part of the last two Centuries, and see if the facts correspond with these inferences.

Who is there that can now endure to read the “Creation” of Du-bartas? Yet all Europe once resounded with his praise; he was car-essed by Kings; and, when his Poem was translated into our language, the Faery Queen faded before it. The name of Spenser, whose genius is of a higher order than even that of Ariosto, is at this day scarcely known beyond the limits of the British Isles. And, if the value of his works is to be estimated from the attention now paid to them by his Countrymen, compared with that which they bestow on those of other writers, it must be pronounced small indeed.

“The laurel, meed of mighty Conquerors
And Poets *sage*”—

are his own words; but his wisdom has, in this particular, been his worst enemy; while its opposite, whether in the shape of folly or madness, has been their best friend. But he was a great power; and bears a high name: the laurel has been awarded to him.

A Dramatic Author, if he write for the Stage, must adapt himself to the taste of the Audience, or they will not endure him; accordingly the mighty genius of Shakespeare was listened to. The People were delighted; but I am not sufficiently versed in Stage antiquities to determine whether they did not flock as eagerly to the representation of many pieces of contemporary Authors, wholly undeserving to appear upon the same boards. Had there been a formal contest for superiority among dramatic Writers, that Shakespeare, like his predecessors Sophocles and Euripides, would have often been subject to the mortification of seeing the prize adjudged to sorry

competitors, becomes too probable when we reflect that the Admirers of Settle and Shadwell were, in a later age, as numerous, and reckoned as respectable in point of talent, as those of Dryden. At all events, that Shakespeare stooped to accommodate himself to the People, is sufficiently apparent; and one of the most striking proofs of his almost omnipotent genius is, that he could turn to such glorious purpose those materials which the prepossessions of the age compelled him to make use of. Yet even this marvellous skill appears not to have been enough to prevent his rivals from having some advantage over him in public estimation; else how can we account for passages and scenes that exist in his works, unless upon a supposition that some of the grossest of them, a fact which in my own mind I have no doubt of, were foisted in by the Players, for the gratification of the many?

But that his Works, whatever might be their reception upon the stage, made little impression upon the ruling Intellects of the time, may be inferred from the fact that Lord Bacon, in his multifarious writings, no where either quotes or alludes to him.¹—His dramatic excellence enabled him to resume possession of the stage after the Restoration; but Dryden tells us that in his time two of Beaumont and Fletcher's Plays were acted for one of Shakespeare's. And so faint and limited was the perception of the poetic beauties of his dramas in the time of Pope, that, in his Edition of the Plays, with a view of rendering to the general Reader a necessary service, he printed between inverted commas those passages which he thought most worthy of notice.

At this day, the French Critics have abated nothing of their aversion to this darling of our Nation: "the English with their Buffon de Shakespeare" is as familiar an expression among them as in the time of Voltaire. Baron Grimm is the only French writer who seems to have perceived his infinite superiority to the first names of the French Theatre; an advantage which the Parisian Critic owed to his German blood and German education. The most enlightened Italians, though well acquainted with our language, are wholly incompetent to measure the proportions of Shakespeare. The Germans only, of foreign nations, are approaching towards a knowledge and feeling of what he is. In some respects they have

¹ The learned Hakewill (a third edition of whose book bears date 1685), writing to refute the error "touching Nature's perpetual and universal decay," cites triumphantly the names of Ariosto, Tasso, Bartas, and Spenser, as instances that poetic genius had not degenerated; but he makes no mention of Shakespeare.

acquired a superiority over the fellow-countrymen of the Poet; for among us it is a current, I might say, an established opinion that Shakespeare is justly praised when he is pronounced to be "a wild irregular genius, in whom great faults are compensated by great beauties." How long may it be before this misconception passes away, and it becomes universally acknowledged that the judgment of Shakespeare in the selection of his materials, and in the manner in which he has made them, heterogeneous as they often are, constitute a unity of their own, and contribute all to one great end, is not less admirable than his imagination, his invention, and his intuitive knowledge of human Nature!

There is extant a small Volume of miscellaneous Poems in which Shakespeare expresses his own feelings in his own Person. It is not difficult to conceive that the Editor, George Ste[e]vens, should have been insensible to the beauties of one portion of that Volume, the Sonnets; though there is not a part of the writings of this Poet where is found in an equal compass a greater number of exquisite feelings felicitously expressed. But, from regard to the Critic's own credit, he would not have ventured to talk of an act of parliament¹ not being strong enough to compel the perusal of these, or any production of Shakespeare, if he had not known that the people of England were ignorant of the treasures contained in those little pieces; and if he had not, moreover, shared the too common propensity of human nature to exult over a supposed fall into the mire of a genius whom he had been compelled to regard with admiration, as an inmate of the celestial regions,—“there sitting where he durst not soar.”

Nine years before the death of Shakespeare, Milton was born; and early in life he published several small poems, which, though on their first appearance they were praised by a few of the judicious, were afterwards neglected to that degree that Pope, in his youth, could pilfer from them without danger of detection.—Whether these poems are at this day justly appreciated I will not undertake to decide: nor would it imply a severe reflection upon the mass of Readers to suppose the contrary; seeing that a Man of the acknowledged genius of Voss, the German Poet, could suffer their spirit to evaporate; and could change their character, as is done in the

¹ This flippant insensibility was publicly reprehended by Mr. Coleridge in a course of Lectures upon Poetry given by him at the Royal Institution. For the various merits of thought and language in Shakespeare's Sonnets, see Numbers, 27, 29, 30, 32, 33, 54, 64, 66, 68, 73, 76, 86, 91, 92, 93, 97, 98, 105, 107, 108, 109, 111, 113, 114, 116, 117, 129, and many others.

translation made by him of the most popular of those pieces. At all events it is certain that these Poems of Milton are now much read, and loudly praised; yet were they little heard of till more than 150 years after their publication; and of the Sonnets, Dr. Johnson, as appears from Boswell's Life of him, was in the habit of thinking and speaking as contemptuously as Ste[e]vens wrote upon those of Shakespeare.

About the time when the Pindaric Odes of Cowley and his imitators, and the productions of that class of curious thinkers whom Dr. Johnson has strangely styled Metaphysical Poets, were beginning to lose something of that extravagant admiration which they had excited, the *Paradise Lost* made its appearance. "Fit audience find though few," was the petition addressed by the Poet to his inspiring Muse. I have said elsewhere that he gained more than he asked; this I believe to be true; but Dr. Johnson has fallen into a gross mistake when he attempts to prove, by the sale of the work, that Milton's Countrymen were "*just* to it" upon its first appearance. Thirteen hundred Copies were sold in two years; an uncommon example, he asserts, of the prevalence of genius in opposition to so much recent enmity as Milton's public conduct had excited. But be it remembered that, if Milton's political and religious opinions, and the manner in which he announced them, had raised him many enemies, they had procured him numerous friends; who, as all personal danger was passed away at the time of publication, would be eager to procure the master-work of a Man whom they revered, and whom they would be proud of praising. The demand did not immediately increase; "for," says Dr. Johnson, "many more Readers" (he means Persons in the habit of reading poetry) "than were supplied at first the Nation did not afford." How careless must a writer be who can make this assertion in the face of so many existing title pages to belie it! Turning to my own shelves, I find the folio of Cowley, seventh Edition, 1681. A book near it is Flatman's Poems, fourth Edition, 1686; Waller, fifth Edition, same date. The Poems of Norris of Bemerton not long after went, I believe, through nine Editions. What further demand there might be for these works I do not know, but I well remember, that twenty-five Years ago, the Booksellers' stalls in London swarmed with the folios of Cowley. This is not mentioned in disparagement of that able writer and amiable Man; but merely to shew—that, if Milton's work was not more read, it was not because readers did not exist at the time. Only three thousand copies of the

Paradise Lost sold in eleven Years; and the Nation, says Dr. Johnson, had been satisfied from 1623 to 1664, that is forty-one Years, with only two Editions of the Works of Shakespeare; which probably did not together make one thousand Copies; facts adduced by the critic to prove the "paucity of Readers."—There were Readers in multitudes; but their money went for other purposes, as their admiration was fixed elsewhere. We are authorized, then, to affirm that the reception of the Paradise Lost, and the slow progress of its fame, are proofs as striking as can be desired that the positions which I am attempting to establish are not erroneous.¹—How amusing to shape to one's self such a critique as a Wit of Charles's days, or a Lord of the Miscellanies, or trading Journalist, of King William's time, would have brought forth, if he had set his faculties industriously to work upon this Poem, every where impregnated with *original* excellence!

So strange indeed are the obliquities of admiration, that they whose opinions are much influenced by authority will often be tempted to think that there are no fixed principles in human nature for this art to rest upon.² I have been honoured by being permitted to peruse in MS. a tract composed between the period of the Revolution and the close of that Century. It is the Work of an English Peer of high accomplishments, its object to form the character and direct the studies of his Son. Perhaps no where does a more beautiful treatise of the kind exist. The good sense and wisdom of the thoughts, the delicacy of the feelings, and the charm of the style, are, throughout, equally conspicuous. Yet the Author, selecting among the Poets of his own Country those whom he deems most worthy of his son's perusal, particularizes only Lord Rochester, Sir John Denham, and Cowley. Writing about the same time, Shaftsbury, an Author at present unjustly depreciated, describes the English Muses as only yet lisping in their Cradles.

The arts by which Pope, soon afterwards, contrived to procure to himself a more general and a higher reputation than perhaps any English Poet ever attained during his life-time, are known to the judicious. And as well known is it to them, that the undue exertion

¹ Hughes is express upon this subject, in his dedication of Spenser's Works to Lord Somers he writes thus: "It was your Lordship's encouraging a beautiful Edition of Paradise Lost that first brought that incomparable Poem to be generally known and esteemed."

² This opinion seems actually to have been entertained by Adam Smith, the worst critic, David Hume not excepted, that Scotland, a soil to which this sort of weed seems natural, has produced.

of these arts is the cause why Pope has for some time held a rank in literature, to which, if he had not been seduced by an over-love of immediate popularity, and had confided more in his native genius, he never could have descended. He bewitched the nation by his melody, and dazzled it by his polished style, and was himself blinded by his own success. Having wandered from humanity in his Eclogues with boyish inexperience, the praise, which these compositions obtained, tempted him into a belief that nature was not to be trusted, at least in pastoral Poetry. To prove this by example, he put his friend Gay upon writing those Eclogues which the Author intended to be burlesque. The Instigator of the work, and his Admirers, could perceive in them nothing but what was ridiculous. Nevertheless, though these Poems contain some odious and even detestable passages, the effect, as Dr. Johnson well observes, "of reality and truth became conspicuous even when the intention was to shew them grovelling and degraded." These Pastorals, ludicrous to those who prided themselves upon their refinement, in spite of those disgusting passages "became popular, and were read with delight as just representations of rural manners and occupations."

Something less than sixty years after the publication of the *Paradise Lost* appeared Thomson's *Winter*; which was speedily followed by his other Seasons. It is a work of inspiration; much of it is written from himself, and nobly from himself. How was it received? "It was no sooner read," says one of his contemporary Biographers, "than universally admired: those only excepted who had not been used to feel, or to look for any thing in poetry, beyond a *point* of satirical or epigrammatic wit, a smart *antithesis* richly trimmed with rhyme, or the softness of an *elegiac* complaint. To such his manly classical spirit could not readily commend itself; till, after a more attentive perusal, they had got the better of their prejudices, and either acquired or affected a truer taste. A few others stood aloof, merely because they had long before fixed the articles of their poetical creed, and resigned themselves to an absolute despair of ever seeing any thing new and original. These were somewhat mortified to find their notions disturbed by the appearance of a poet, who seemed to owe nothing but to nature and his own genius. But, in a short time, the applause became unanimous; every one wondering how so many pictures, and pictures so familiar, should have moved them but faintly to what they felt in his descriptions. His digressions too, the overflowing of

a tender benevolent heart, charmed the reader no less; leaving him in doubt, whether he should more admire the Poet or love the Man."

This case appears to bear strongly against us:—but we must distinguish between wonder and legitimate admiration. The subject of the work is the changes produced in the appearances of nature by the revolution of the year: and, by undertaking to write in verse, Thomson pledged himself to treat his subject as became a Poet. Now it is remarkable that, excepting a passage or two in the Windsor Forest of Pope, and some delightful pictures in the Poems of Lady Winchelsea, the Poetry of the period intervening between the publication of the *Paradise Lost* and the *Seasons* does not contain a single new image of external nature; and scarcely presents a familiar one from which it can be inferred that the eye of the Poet had been steadily fixed upon his object, much less that his feelings had urged him to work upon it in the spirit of genuine imagination. To what a low state knowledge of the most obvious and important phenomena had sunk, is evident from the style in which Dryden has executed a description of Night in one of his Tragedies, and Pope his translation of the celebrated moon-light scene in the *Iliad*. A blind man, in the habit of attending accurately to descriptions casually dropped from the lips of those around him, might easily depict these appearances with more truth. Dryden's lines are vague, bombastic, and senseless;¹ those of Pope, though he had Homer to guide him, are throughout false and contradictory. The verses of Dryden, once highly celebrated, are forgotten; those of Pope still retain their hold upon public estimation,—nay, there is not a passage of descriptive poetry, which at this day finds so many and such ardent admirers. Strange to think of an Enthusiast, as may have been the case with thousands, reciting those verses under the cope of a moon-light sky, without having his raptures in the least disturbed by a suspicion of their absurdity.—If these two distinguished Writers could habitually think that the visible universe was of so little consequence to a Poet, that it was scarcely necessary for him to cast his eyes upon it, we may be assured that those

¹ CORTES *alone, in a night-gown.*

All things are hush'd as Nature's self lay dead:
The mountains seem to nod their drowsy head:
The little Birds in dreams their songs repeat,
And sleeping Flowers beneath the Night-dew sweat:
Even Lust and Envy sleep; yet Love denies
Rest to my soul, and slumber to my eyes.

DRYDEN'S *Indian Emperor.*

passages of the elder Poets which faithfully and poetically describe the phenomena of nature, were not at that time holden in much estimation, and that there was little accurate attention paid to these appearances.

Wonder is the natural product of Ignorance; and as the soil was *in such good condition* at the time of the publication of the Seasons, the crop was doubtless abundant. Neither individuals nor nations become corrupt all at once, nor are they enlightened in a moment. Thomson was an inspired Poet, but he could not work miracles; in cases where the art of seeing had in some degree been learned, the teacher would further the proficiency of his pupils, but he could do little *more*; though so far does vanity assist men in acts of self-deception that many would often fancy they recognized a likeness when they knew nothing of the original. Having shewn that much of what his Biographer deemed genuine admiration must in fact have been blind wonderment,—how is the rest to be accounted for? —Thomson was fortunate in the very title of his Poem, which seemed to bring it home to the prepared sympathies of every one: in the next place, notwithstanding his high powers, he writes a vicious style; and his false ornaments are exactly of that kind which would be most likely to strike the undiscerning. He likewise abounds with sentimental common-places, that from the manner in which they were brought forward bore an imposing air of novelty. In any well-used Copy of the Seasons the Book generally opens of itself with the rhapsody on love, or with one of the stories (perhaps Damon and Musidora); these also are prominent in our Collections of Extracts; and are the parts of his Works which, after all, were probably most efficient in first recommending the Author to general notice. Pope, repaying praises which he had received, and wishing to extol him to the highest, only styles him “an elegant and philosophical Poet;” nor are we able to collect any unquestionable proofs that the true characteristics of Thomson’s genius as an imaginative Poet were perceived, till the elder Warton, almost forty years after the publication of the Seasons, pointed them out by a note in his Essay on the life and writings of Pope. In the Castle of Indolence (of which Gray speaks so coldly) these characteristics were almost as conspicuously displayed, and in verse more harmonious and diction more pure. Yet that fine Poem was neglected on its appearance, and is at this day the delight only of a Few!

When Thomson died, Collins breathed forth his regrets into an

Elegiac Poem, in which he pronounces a poetical curse upon *him* who should regard with insensibility the place where the Poet's remains were deposited. The Poems of the mourner himself have now passed through innumerable Editions, and are universally known; but if, when Collins died, the same kind of imprecation had been pronounced by a surviving admirer, small is the number whom it would not have comprehended. The notice which his poems attained during his life-time was so small, and of course the sale so insignificant, that not long before his death he deemed it right to repay to the Bookseller the sum which he had advanced for them, and threw the Edition into the fire.

Next in importance to the Seasons of Thomson, though at considerable distance from that work in order of time, come the Reliques of Ancient English Poetry; collected, new-modelled, and in many instances (if such a contradiction in terms may be used) composed, by the editor, Dr. Percy. This Work did not steal silently into the world, as is evident from the number of legendary tales, which appeared not long after its publication; and which were modelled, as the Authors persuaded themselves, after the old Ballad. The Compilation was however ill-suited to the then existing taste of City society; and Dr. Johnson, mid the little senate to which he gave laws, was not sparing in his exertions to make it an object of contempt. The Critic triumphed, the legendary imitators were deservedly disregarded, and, as undeservedly, their ill-imitated models sank, in this Country, into temporary neglect; while Burger, and other able Writers of Germany, were translating, or imitating, these Reliques, and composing, with the aid of inspiration thence derived, Poems which are the delight of the German nation. Dr. Percy was so abashed by the ridicule flung upon his labours from the ignorance and insensibility of the Persons with whom he lived, that, though while he was writing under a mask he had not wanted resolution to follow his genius into the regions of true simplicity and genuine pathos, (as is evinced by the exquisite ballad of Sir Cauline and by many other pieces) yet, when he appeared in his own person and character as a poetical writer, he adopted, as in the tale of the Hermit of Warkworth, a diction scarcely in any one of its features distinguishable from the vague, the glossy, and unfeeling language of his day. I mention this remarkable fact with regret, esteeming the genius of Dr. Percy in this kind of writing superior to that of any other man by whom, in modern times, it has been cultivated. That even Burger (to whom Klopstock

gave, in my hearing, a commendation which he denied to Goethe and Schiller, pronouncing him to be a genuine Poet, and one of the few among the Germans whose works would last) had not the fine sensibility of Percy, might be shewn from many passages, in which he has deserted his original only to go astray. For example,

Now daye was gone, and night was come,
And all were fast asleepe,
All, save the Ladye Emmeline,
Who sate in her bowre to weepe:
And soone shee heard her true Love's voice
Low whispering at the walle,
Awake, awake, my deare Ladye,
'Tis I thy true-love call.

Which is thus tricked out and dilated,

Als nun die Nacht Gebirg' und Thal
Vermummt in Rabenschatten,
Und Hochburgs Lampen über-all
Schon ausgeflimmert hatten,
Und alles tief entschlafen war;
Doch nur das Fräulein immerdar,
Voll Fieberangst, noch wachte,
Und seinen Ritter dachte:
Da horch! Ein süßer Liebeston
Kam leis' empor geflogen.
'Ho, Trudchen, ho! Da bin ich schon!
Frisch auf! Dich angezogen!'

But from humble ballads we must ascend to heroics.

All hail, Macpherson! hail to thee, Sire of Ossian! The Phantom was begotten by the snug embrace of an impudent Highlander upon a cloud of tradition—it travelled southward, where it was greeted with acclamation, and the thin Consistence took its course through Europe, upon the breath of popular applause. The Editor of the "Reliques" had indirectly preferred a claim to the praise of invention by not concealing that his supplementary labours were considerable: how selfish his conduct contrasted with that of the disinterested Gael, who, like Lear, gives his kingdom away, and is content to become a pensioner upon his own issue for a beggarly pittance!—Open this far-famed Book!—I have done so at random, and the beginning of the "Epic Poem Temora," in eight Books, presents itself. "The blue waves of Ullin roll in light. The green hills are covered with day. Trees shake their dusky heads in the breeze. Grey torrents pour their noisy streams. Two green hills with aged oaks surround a narrow plain. The blue course of a

stream is there. On its banks stood Cairbar of Atha. His spear supports the king; the red eyes of his fear are sad. Cormac rises on his soul with all his ghastly wounds." Precious memorandums from the pocket-book of the blind Ossian!

If it be unbecoming, as I acknowledge that for the most part it is, to speak disrespectfully of Works that have enjoyed for a length of time a widely spread reputation, without at the same time producing irrefragable proofs of their unworthiness, let me be forgiven upon this occasion.—Having had the good fortune to be born and reared in a mountainous Country, from my very childhood I have felt the falsehood that pervades the volumes imposed upon the World under the name of Ossian. From what I saw with my own eyes, I knew that the imagery was spurious. In nature every thing is distinct, yet nothing defined into absolute independent singleness. In Macpherson's work, it is exactly the reverse; every thing (that is not stolen) is in this manner defined, insulated, dislocated, deadened, —yet nothing distinct. It will always be so when words are substituted for things. To say that the characters never could exist, that the manners are impossible, and that a dream has more substance than the whole state of society, as there depicted, is doing nothing more than pronouncing a censure which Macpherson defied; when, with the steeps of Morven before his eyes, he could talk so familiarly of his Car-borne heroes;—of Morven, which, if one may judge from its appearance at the distance of a few miles, contains scarcely an acre of ground sufficiently accommodating for a sledge to be trailed along its surface.—Mr. Malcolm Laing has ably shewn that the diction of this pretended translation is a motley assembly from all quarters; but he is so fond of making out parallel passages as to call poor Macpherson to account for his "*ands*" and his "*buts!*" and he has weakened his argument by conducting it as if he thought that every striking resemblance was a *conscious* plagiarism. It is enough that the coincidences are too remarkable for its being probable or possible that they could arise in different minds without communication between them. Now as the Translators of the Bible, Shakespeare, Milton, and Pope, could not be indebted to Macpherson, it follows that he must have owed his fine feathers to them; unless we are prepared gravely to assert, with Madame de Stael, that many of the characteristic beauties of our most celebrated English Poets are derived from the ancient Fingallian; in which case the modern translator would have been but giving back to Ossian his own.—It is consistent that Lucien Buonaparte, who could

censure Milton for having surrounded Satan in the infernal regions with courtly and regal splendour, should pronounce the modern Ossian to be the glory of Scotland;—a Country that has produced a Dunbar, a Buchanan, a Thomson, and a Burns! These opinions are of ill omen for the Epic ambition of him who has given them to the world.

Yet, much as those pretended treasures of antiquity have been admired, they have been wholly uninfluential upon the literature of the Country. No succeeding Writer appears to have caught from them a ray of inspiration; no Author in the least distinguished, has ventured formally to imitate them—except the Boy, Chatterton, on their first appearance. He had perceived, from the successful trials which he himself had made in literary forgery, how few critics were able to distinguish between a real ancient medal and a counterfeit of modern manufacture; and he set himself to the work of filling a Magazine with *Saxon poems*,—counterparts of those of Ossian, as like his as one of his misty stars is to another. This incapability to amalgamate with the literature of the Island is, in my estimation, a decisive proof that the book is essentially unnatural; nor should I require any other to demonstrate it to be a forgery, audacious as worthless.—Contrast, in this respect, the effect of Macpherson's publication with the *Reliques of Percy*, so unassuming, so modest in their pretensions!—I have already stated how much Germany is indebted to this latter work; and for our own Country, its Poetry has been absolutely redeemed by it. I do not think that there is an able Writer in verse of the present day who would not be proud to acknowledge his obligations to the *Reliques*; I know that it is so with my friends; and, for myself, I am happy in this occasion to make a public avowal of my own.

Dr. Johnson, more fortunate in his contempt of the labours of Macpherson than those of his modest friend, was solicited not long after to furnish Prefaces biographical and critical for some of the most eminent English Poets. The Booksellers took upon themselves to make the collection; they referred probably to the most popular miscellanies, and, unquestionably, to their Books of accounts; and decided upon the claim of Authors to be admitted into a body of the most Eminent, from the familiarity of their names with the readers of that day, and by the profits, which, from the sale of his works, each had brought and was bringing to the Trade. The Editor was allowed a limited exercise of discretion, and the Authors whom he recommended are scarcely to be men-

tioned without a smile. We open the volume of Prefatory Lives, and to our astonishment the *first* name we find is that of Cowley!—What is become of the Morning-star of English Poetry? Where is the bright Elizabethan Constellation? Or, if Names are more acceptable than images, where is the ever-to-be-honoured Chaucer? where is Spenser? where Sydney? and lastly where he, whose rights as a Poet, contradistinguished from those which he is universally allowed to possess as a Dramatist, we have vindicated, where Shakespeare?—These, and a multitude of others not unworthy to be placed near them, their contemporaries and successors, we have *not*. But in their stead, we have (could better be expected when precedence was to be settled by an abstract of reputation at any given period made as in this case before us?) we have Roscommon, and Stepney, and Phillips, and Walsh, and Smith, and Duke, and King, and Spratt—Halifax, Granville, Sheffield, Congreve, Broome, and other reputed Magnates; Writers in metre utterly worthless and useless, except for occasions like the present, when their productions are referred to as evidence what a small quantity of brain is necessary to procure a considerable stock of admiration, provided the aspirant will accommodate himself to the likings and fashions of his day.

As I do not mean to bring down this retrospect to our own times, it may with propriety be closed at the era of this distinguished event. From the literature of other ages and countries, proofs equally cogent might have been adduced that the opinions announced in the former part of this Essay are founded upon truth. It was not an agreeable office, nor a prudent undertaking, to declare them, but their importance seemed to render it a duty. It may still be asked, where lies the particular relation of what has been said to these Volumes?—The question will be easily answered by the discerning Reader who is old enough to remember the taste that was prevalent when some of these Poems were first published, seventeen years ago; who has also observed to what degree the Poetry of this Island has since that period been coloured by them; and who is further aware of the unremitting hostility with which, upon some principle or other, they have each and all been opposed. A sketch of my own notion of the constitution of Fame has been given; and, as far as concerns myself, I have cause to be satisfied. The love, the admiration, the indifference, the slight, the aversion, and even the contempt, with which these Poems have been received, knowing, as I do, the source within my own mind, from which they

have proceeded, and the labour and pains, which, when labour and pains appeared needful, have been bestowed upon them,—must all, if I think consistently, be received as pledges and tokens, bearing the same general impression though widely different in value;—they are all proofs that for the present time I have not laboured in vain; and afford assurances, more or less authentic, that the products of my industry will endure.

If there be one conclusion more forcibly pressed upon us than another by the review which has been given of the fortunes and fate of Poetical Works, it is this,—that every Author, as far as he is great and at the same time *original*, has had the task of *creating* the taste by which he is to be enjoyed: so has it been, so will it continue to be. This remark was long since made to me by the philosophical Friend for the separation of whose Poems from my own I have previously expressed my regret. The predecessors of an original Genius of a high order will have smoothed the way for all that he has in common with them;—and much he will have in common; but, for what is peculiarly his own, he will be called upon to clear and often to shape his own road:—he will be in the condition of Hannibal among the Alps.

And where lies the real difficulty of creating that taste by which a truly original Poet is to be relished? Is it in breaking the bonds of custom, in overcoming the prejudices of false refinement, and displacing the aversions of inexperience? Or, if he labour for an object which here and elsewhere I have proposed to myself, does it consist in divesting the Reader of the pride that induces him to dwell upon those points wherein Men differ from each other, to the exclusion of those in which all Men are alike, or the same; and in making him ashamed of the vanity that renders him insensible of the appropriate excellence which civil arrangements, less unjust than might appear, and Nature illimitable in her bounty, have conferred on Men who stand below him in the scale of society? Finally, does it lie in establishing that dominion over the spirits of Readers by which they are to be humbled and humanized, in order that they may be purified and exalted?

If these ends are to be attained by the mere communication of *knowledge*, it does *not* lie here.—TASTE, I would remind the Reader, like IMAGINATION, is a word which has been forced to extend its services far beyond the point to which philosophy would have confined them. It is a metaphor, taken from a *passive* sense of the human body, and transferred to things which are in their essence

not passive,—to intellectual *acts* and *operations*. The word, imagination, has been over-strained, from impulses honourable to mankind, to meet the demands of the faculty which is perhaps the noblest of our nature. In the instance of taste, the process has been reversed; and from the prevalence of dispositions at once injurious and discreditable,—being no other than that selfishness which is the child of apathy,—which, as Nations decline in productive and creative power, makes them value themselves upon a presumed refinement of judging. Poverty of language is the primary cause of the use which we make of the word, Imagination; but the word, Taste, has been stretched to the sense which it bears in modern Europe by habits of self-conceit, inducing that inversion in the order of things whereby a passive faculty is made paramount among the faculties conversant with the fine arts. Proportion and congruity, the requisite knowledge being supposed, are subjects upon which taste may be trusted; it is competent to this office;—for in its intercourse with these the mind is *passive*, and is affected painfully or pleasantly as by an instinct. But the profound and the exquisite in feeling, the lofty and universal in thought and imagination; or in ordinary language the pathetic and the sublime;—are neither of them, accurately speaking, objects of a faculty which could ever without a sinking in the spirit of Nations have been designated by the metaphor—*Taste*. And why? Because without the exertion of a co-operating *power* in the mind of the Reader, there can be no adequate sympathy with either of these emotions: without this auxiliar impulse elevated or profound passion cannot exist.

Passion, it must be observed, is derived from a word which signifies *suffering*; but the connection which suffering has with effort, with exertion, and *action*, is immediate and inseparable. How strikingly is this property of human nature exhibited by the fact, that, in popular language, to be in a passion, is to be angry!—But,

“Anger in hasty *words* or *blows*
Itself discharges on its foes.”

To be moved, then, by a passion, is to be excited, often to external, and always to internal, effort; whether for the continuance and strengthening of the passion, or for its suppression, accordingly as the course which it takes may be painful or pleasurable. If the latter, the soul must contribute to its support, or it never becomes vivid,—and soon languishes, and dies. And this brings us to the point. If every great Poet with whose writings men are familiar, in the

highest exercise of his genius, before he can be thoroughly enjoyed, has to call forth and to communicate *power*, this service, in a still greater degree, falls upon an original Writer, at his first appearance in the world.—Of genius the only proof is, the act of doing well what is worthy to be done, and what was never done before: Of genius, in the fine arts, the only infallible sign is the widening the sphere of human sensibility, for the delight, honor, and benefit of human nature. Genius is the introduction of a new element into the intellectual universe: or, if that be not allowed, it is the application of powers to objects on which they had not before been exercised, or the employment of them in such a manner as to produce effects hitherto unknown. What is all this but an advance, or a conquest, made by the soul of the Poet? Is it to be supposed that the Reader can make progress of this kind, like an Indian Prince or General—stretched on his Palanquin, and borne by his Slaves? No, he is invigorated and inspirited by his Leader, in order that he may exert himself, for he cannot proceed in quiescence, he cannot be carried like a dead weight. Therefore to create taste is to call forth and bestow power, of which knowledge is the effect; and *there* lies the true difficulty.

As the pathetic participates of an *animal* sensation, it might seem—that, if the springs of this emotion were genuine, all men, possessed of competent knowledge of the facts and circumstances, would be instantaneously affected. And, doubtless, in the works of every true Poet will be found passages of that species of excellence, which is proved by effects immediate and universal. But there are emotions of the pathetic that are simple and direct, and others—that are complex and revolutionary; some—to which the heart yields with gentleness, others,—against which it struggles with pride: these varieties are infinite as the combinations of circumstance and the constitutions of character. Remember, also, that the medium through which, in poetry, the heart is to be affected—is language; a thing subject to endless fluctuations and arbitrary associations. The genius of the Poet melts these down for his purpose; but they retain their shape and quality to him who is not capable of exerting, within his own mind, a corresponding energy. There is also a meditative, as well as a human, pathos; an enthusiastic, as well as an ordinary, sorrow; a sadness that has its seat in the depths of reason, to which the mind cannot sink gently of itself—but to which it must descend by treading the steps of thought. And for the sublime,—if we consider what are the cares that occupy

the passing day, and how remote is the practice and the course of life from the sources of sublimity, in the soul of Man, can it be wondered that there is little existing preparation for a Poet charged with a new mission to extend its kingdom, and to augment and spread its enjoyments?

Away, then, with the senseless iteration of the word, *popular*, applied to new works in Poetry, as if there were no test of excellence in this first of the fine arts but that all Men should run after its productions, as if urged by an appetite, or constrained by a spell!—The qualities of writing best fitted for eager reception are either such as startle the world into attention by their audacity and extravagance; or they are chiefly of a superficial kind, lying upon the surfaces of manners; or arising out of a selection and arrangement of incidents, by which the mind is kept upon the stretch of curiosity, and the fancy amused without the trouble of thought. But in every thing which is to send the soul into herself, to be admonished of her weakness or to be made conscious of her power;—wherever life and nature are described as operated upon by the creative or abstracting virtue of the imagination; wherever the instinctive wisdom of antiquity and her heroic passions uniting, in the heart of the Poet, with the meditative wisdom of later ages, have produced that accord of sublimated humanity, which is at once a history of the remote past and a prophetic annunciation of the remotest future, *there*, the Poet must reconcile himself for a season to few and scattered hearers.—Grand thoughts (and Shakespeare must often have sighed over this truth), as they are most naturally and most fitly conceived in solitude, so can they not be brought forth in the midst of plaudits without some violation of their sanctity. Go to a silent exhibition of the productions of the Sister Art, and be convinced that the qualities which dazzle at first sight, and kindle the admiration of the multitude, are essentially different from those by which permanent influence is secured. Let us not shrink from following up these principles as far as they will carry us, and conclude with observing—that there never has been a period, and perhaps never will be, in which vicious poetry, of some kind or other, has not excited more zealous admiration, and been far more generally read, than good; but this advantage attends the good, that the *individual*, as well as the species, survives from age to age: whereas, of the depraved, though the species be immortal the individual quickly *perishes*; the object of present admiration vanishes, being supplanted by some other as easily produced; which,

though no better, brings with it at least the irritation of novelty,—with adaptation, more or less skilful, to the changing humours of the majority of those who are most at leisure to regard poetical works when they first solicit their attention.

Is it the result of the whole that, in the opinion of the Writer, the judgment of the People is not to be respected? The thought is most injurious; and could the charge be brought against him, he would repel it with indignation. The People have already been justified, and their eulogium pronounced by implication, when it was said, above—that, of *good* Poetry, the *individual*, as well as the species, *survives*. And how does it survive but through the People? what preserves it but their intellect and their wisdom?

“——Past and future, are the wings
On whose support, harmoniously conjoined,
Moves the great Spirit of human knowledge——”

MS.

The voice that issues from this Spirit is that Vox populi which the Deity inspires. Foolish must he be who can mistake for this a local acclamation, or a transitory outcry—transitory though it be for years, local though from a Nation. Still more lamentable is his error, who can believe that there is any thing of divine infallibility in the clamour of that small though loud portion of the community, ever governed by factitious influence, which, under the name of the PUBLIC, passes itself, upon the unthinking, for the PEOPLE. Towards the Public, the Writer hopes that he feels as much deference as it is intitled to: but to the People, philosophically characterized, and to the embodied spirit of their knowledge, so far as it exists and moves, at the present, faithfully supported by its two wings, the past and the future, his devout respect, his reverence, is due. He offers it willingly and readily; and, this done, takes leave of his Readers, by assuring them—that, if he were not persuaded that the Contents of these Volumes, and the Work to which they are subsidiary, evinced something of the “Vision and the Faculty divine;” and that, both in words and things, they will operate in their degree, to extend the domain of sensibility for the delight, the honor, and the benefit of human nature, notwithstanding the many happy hours which he has employed in their composition, and the manifold comforts and enjoyments they have procured to him, he would not, if a wish could do it, save them from immediate destruction;—from becoming at this moment, to the world, as a thing that had never been.

THE PRELUDE

The Prelude, or, Growth of a Poet's Mind, was published in 1850, after Wordsworth's death. The title and subtitle were supplied by his widow.

For the interesting and complicated story of the poem's composition, the reader is referred to de Selincourt's exhaustive edition of 1926, which contains two versions, that completed in 1805-06 and that prepared by Wordsworth for publication in 1850.

The changes introduced in the text between 1805 and 1850 were many but their importance has frequently been exaggerated. Some of the autobiographic elements were blurred in the later text, expressions of opinion and belief were sharpened and sometimes modified. But whatever development took place, and despite constant work on the text, all the fundamental beliefs and attitudes are to be found in the earlier version.

Since the present selection from Wordsworth's work attempts also to show the "growth of a poet's mind" by preserving as far as possible a chronological sequence, the version of 1805-06 has been preferred here. It was untitled but addressed to Coleridge.

The tale of *Vaudracour and Julia*, related in Book Nine, from line 554 to the end, is given in a brief summary in the 1850 version of *The Prelude*, for it had been separately published in 1820. The phrase at lines 552-3, "related by my patriot Friend, And others", is expanded in the Fenwick Note to the 1820 version:

Faithfully narrated, though with the omission of many pathetic circumstances, from the mouth of a French lady, who had been an eye and ear witness of all that was done and said.

In spite of the objectiveness of this note, the poem has a clear emotional reference to Wordsworth's love for Annette Vallon, to which there is no factual reference in *The Prelude*.

[THE PRELUDE
OR, GROWTH OF A POET'S MIND]

BOOK FIRST

Introduction—Childhood and School-Time

O H there is blessing in this gentle breeze
That blows from the green fields and from the clouds
And from the sky: it beats against my cheek,
And seems half-conscious of the joy it gives.
O welcome Messenger! O welcome Friend!
A captive greets thee, coming from a house
Of bondage, from yon City's walls set free,
A prison where he hath been long immured.
Now I am free, enfranchis'd and at large,
May fix my habitation where I will.
What dwelling shall receive me? In what Vale
Shall be my harbour? Underneath what grove
Shall I take up my home, and what sweet stream
Shall with its murmur lull me to my rest?
The earth is all before me: with a heart
Joyous, nor scar'd at its own liberty,
I look about, and should the guide I chuse
Be nothing better than a wandering cloud,
I cannot miss my way. I breathe again;
Trances of thought and mountings of the mind
Come fast upon me: it is shaken off,
As by miraculous gift 'tis shaken off,
That burthen of my own unnatural self,
The heavy weight of many a weary day
Not mine, and such as were not made for me.
Long months of peace (if such bold word accord
With any promises of human life),
Long months of ease and undisturb'd delight
Are mine in prospect; whither shall I turn
By road or pathway or through open field,

Or shall a twig or any floating thing
Upon the river, point me out my course?

Enough that I am free; for months to come
May dedicate myself to chosen tasks;
May quit the tiresome sea and dwell on shore,
If not a Settler on the soil, at least
To drink wild water, and to pluck green herbs,
And gather fruits fresh from their native bough.
Nay more, if I may trust myself, this hour
Hath brought a gift that consecrates my joy;
For I, methought, while the sweet breath of Heaven
Was blowing on my body, felt within
A corresponding mild creative breeze,
A vital breeze which travell'd gently on
O'er things which it had made, and is become
A tempest, a redundant energy
Vexing its own creation. 'Tis a power
That does not come unrecogniz'd, a storm,
Which, breaking up a long-continued frost
Brings with it vernal promises, the hope
Of active days, of dignity and thought,
Of prowess in an honorable field,
Pure passions, virtue, knowledge, and delight,
The holy life of music and of verse.

Thus far, O Friend! did I, not used to make
A present joy the matter of my Song,
Pour out, that day, my soul in measur'd strains
Even in the very words which I have here
Recorded: to the open fields I told
A prophecy: poetic numbers came
Spontaneously, and cloth'd in priestly robe
My spirit, thus singled out, as it might seem,
For holy services: great hopes were mine;
My own voice chear'd me, and, far more, the mind's
Internal echo of the imperfect sound;
To both I listen'd, drawing from them both
A cheerful confidence in things to come.

Whereat, being not unwilling now to give
A respite to this passion, I paced on

Gently, with careless steps; and came, erelong,
 To a green shady place where down I sate
 Beneath a tree, slackening my thoughts by choice,
 And settling into gentler happiness.
 'Twas Autumn, and a calm and placid day,
 With warmth as much as needed from a sun
 Two hours declin'd towards the west, a day
 With silver clouds, and sunshine on the grass,
 And, in the shelter'd grove where I was couch'd
 A perfect stillness. On the ground I lay
 Passing through many thoughts, yet mainly such
 As to myself pertain'd. I made a choice
 Of one sweet Vale whither my steps should turn
 And saw, methought, the very house and fields
 Present before my eyes: nor did I fail
 To add, meanwhile, assurance of some work
 Of glory, there forthwith to be begun,
 Perhaps, too, there perform'd. Thus long I lay
 Chear'd by the genial pillow of the earth
 Beneath my head, sooth'd by a sense of touch
 From the warm ground, that balanced me, else lost
 Entirely, seeing nought, nought hearing, save
 When here and there, about the grove of Oaks
 Where was my bed, an acorn from the trees
 Fell audibly, and with a startling sound.

Thus occupied in mind, I linger'd here
 Contented, nor rose up until the sun
 Had almost touch'd the horizon, bidding then
 A farewell to the City left behind,
 Even with the chance equipment of that hour
 I journey'd towards the Vale that I had chosen.
 It was a splendid evening; and my soul
 Did once again make trial of the strength
 Restored to her afresh; nor did she want
 Eolian visitations; but the harp
 Was soon defrauded, and the banded host
 Of harmony dispers'd in straggling sounds
 And, lastly, utter silence. "Be it so,
 It is an injury," said I, "to this day
 To think of any thing but present joy."

So like a Peasant I pursued my road
 Beneath the evening sun, nor had one wish
 Again to bend the sabbath of that time
 To a servile yoke. What need of many words?
 A pleasant loitering journey, through two days
 Continued, brought me to my hermitage.

I spare to speak, my Friend, of what ensued,
 The admiration and the love, the life
 In common things; the endless store of things
 Rare, or at least so seeming, every day
 Found all about me in one neighbourhood,
 The self-congratulation, the complete
 Composure, and the happiness entire.
 But speedily a longing in me rose
 To brace myself to some determin'd aim,
 Reading or thinking, either to lay up
 New stores, or rescue from decay the old
 By timely interference, I had hopes
 Still higher, that with a frame of outward life,
 I might endue, might fix in a visible home
 Some portion of those phantoms of conceit
 That had been floating loose about so long,
 And to such Beings temperately deal forth
 The many feelings that oppressed my heart.
 But I have been discouraged; gleams of light
 Flash often from the East, then disappear
 And mock me with a sky that ripens not
 Into a steady morning: if my mind,
 Remembering the sweet promise of the past,
 Would gladly grapple with some noble theme,
 Vain is her wish; where'er she turns she finds
 Impediments from day to day renew'd.

And now it would content me to yield up
 Those lofty hopes awhile for present gifts
 Of humbler industry. But, O dear Friend!
 The Poet, gentle creature as he is,
 Hath, like the Lover, his unruly times;
 His fits when he is neither sick nor well,
 Though no distress be near him but his own

Unmanageable thoughts. The mind itself
 The meditative mind, best pleased, perhaps,
 While she, as duteous as the Mother Dove,
 Sits brooding, lives not always to that end,
 But hath less quiet instincts, goadings on
 That drive her as in trouble through the groves.
 With me is now such passion, which I blame
 No otherwise than as it lasts too long.

When, as becomes a man who would prepare
 For such a glorious work, I through myself
 Make rigorous inquisition, the report
 Is often chearing; for I neither seem
 To lack, that first great gift! the vital soul,
 Nor general truths which are themselves a sort
 Of Elements and Agents, Under-Powers,
 Subordinate helpers of the living mind.
 Nor am I naked in external things,
 Forms, images; nor numerous other aids
 Of less regard, though won perhaps with toil,
 And needful to build up a Poet's praise.
 Time, place, and manners, these I seek, and these
 I find in plenteous store; but nowhere such
 As may be singled out with steady choice;
 No little Band of yet remember'd names
 Whom I, in perfect confidence, might hope
 To summon back from lonesome banishment
 And make them inmates in the hearts of men
 Now living, or to live in times to come.
 Sometimes, mistaking vainly, as I fear,
 Proud spring-tide swellings for a regular sea,
 I settle on some British theme, some old
 Romantic tale, by Milton left unsung;
 More often resting at some gentle place
 Within the groves of Chivalry, I pipe
 Among the Shepherds, with reposing Knights
 Sit by a Fountain-side, and hear their tales.
 Sometimes, more sternly mov'd, I would relate
 How vanquish'd Mithridates northward pass'd,
 And, hidden in the cloud of years, became
 That Odin, Father of a Race, by whom

Perish'd the Roman Empire: how the Friends
 And Followers of Sertorius, out of Spain
 Flying, found shelter in the Fortunate Isles;
 And left their usages, their arts, and laws,
 To disappear by a slow gradual death;
 To dwindle and to perish one by one
 Starved in those narrow bounds: but not the Soul
 Of Liberty, which fifteen hundred years
 Surviv'd, and, when the European came
 With skill and power that could not be withstood,
 Did, like a pestilence, maintain its hold,
 And wasted down by glorious death that Race
 Of natural Heroes: or I would record
 How in tyrannic times some unknown man,
 Unheard of in the Chronicles of Kings,
 Suffer'd in silence for the love of truth;
 How that one Frenchman, through continued force
 Of meditation on the inhuman deeds
 Of the first Conquerors of the Indian Isles,
 Went single in his ministry across
 The Ocean, not to comfort the Oppress'd,
 But, like a thirsty wind, to roam about,
 Withering the Oppressor: how Gustavus found
 Help at his need in Dalecarlia's Mines:
 How Wallace fought for Scotland, left the name
 Of Wallace to be found like a wild flower,
 All over his dear Country, left the deeds
 Of Wallace, like a family of Ghosts,
 To people the steep rocks and river banks,
 Her natural sanctuaries, with a local soul
 Of independence and stern liberty.
 Sometimes it suits me better to shape out
 Some Tale from my own heart, more near akin
 To my own passions and habitual thoughts,
 Some variegated story, in the main
 Lofty, with interchange of gentler things.
 But deadening admonitions will succeed
 And the whole beauteous Fabric seems to lack
 Foundation, and, withal, appears throughout
 Shadowy and unsubstantial. Then, last wish,
 My last and favourite aspiration! then

I yearn towards some philosophic Song
 Of Truth that cherishes our daily life;
 With meditations passionate from deep
 Recesses in man's heart, immortal verse
 Thoughtfully fitted to the Orphean lyre;
 But from this awful burthen I full soon
 Take refuge, and beguile myself with trust
 That mellow years will bring a riper mind
 And clearer insight. Thus from day to day
 I live, a mockery of the brotherhood
 Of vice and virtue, with no skill to part
 Vague longing that is bred by want of power
 From paramount impulse not to be withstood,
 A timorous capacity from prudence;
 From circumspection, infinite delay.
 Humility and modest awe themselves
 Betray me, serving often for a cloak
 To a more subtle selfishness, that now
 Doth lock my functions up in blank reserve,
 Now dupes me by an over-anxious eye
 That with a false activity beats off
 Simplicity and self-presented truth.
 —Ah! better far than this, to stray about
 Voluptuously through fields and rural walks,
 And ask no record of the hours, given up
 To vacant musing, unprov'd neglect
 Of all things, and deliberate holiday;
 Far better never to have heard the name
 Of zeal and just ambition, than to live
 Thus baffled by a mind that every hour
 Turns recreant to her task, takes heart again,
 Then feels immediately some hollow thought
 Hang like an interdict upon her hopes.
 This is my lot; for either still I find
 Some imperfection in the chosen theme,
 Or see of absolute accomplishment
 Much wanting, so much wanting, in myself,
 That I recoil and droop, and seek repose
 In listlessness from vain perplexity,
 Unprofitably travelling towards the grave,
 Like a false steward who hath much received

THE PRELUDE

And renders nothing back.—Was it for this
 That one, the fairest of all Rivers, lov'd
 To blend his murmurs with my Nurse's song,
 And from his alder shades and rocky falls,
 And from his fords and shallows, sent a voice
 That flow'd along my dreams? For this, didst Thou,
 O Derwent! travelling over the green Plains
 Near my "sweet Birthplace," didst thou, beauteous Stream,
 Make ceaseless music through the night and day
 Which with its steady cadence, tempering
 Our human waywardness, compos'd my thoughts
 To more than infant softness, giving me,
 Among the fretful dwellings of mankind,
 A foretaste, a dim earnest, of the calm
 That Nature breathes among the hills and groves.
 When, having left his Mountains, to the Towers
 Of Cockermouth that beauteous River came,
 Behind my Father's House he pass'd, close by,
 Along the margin of our Terrace Walk.
 He was a Playmate whom we dearly lov'd.
 Oh! many a time have I, a five years' Child,
 A naked Boy, in one delightful rill,
 A little Mill-race sever'd from his stream,
 Made one long bathing of a summer's day,
 Bask'd in the sun, and plunged, and bask'd again
 Alternate all a summer's day, or cours'd
 Over the sandy fields, leaping through groves
 Of yellow grunsel, or when crag and hill,
 The woods, and distant Skiddaw's lofty height,
 Were bronzed with a deep radiance, stood alone
 Beneath the sky, as if I had been born
 On Indian Plains, and from my Mother's hut
 Had run abroad in wantonness, to sport,
 A naked Savage, in the thunder shower.

Fair seed-time had my soul, and I grew up
 Foster'd alike by beauty and by fear;
 Much favour'd in my birthplace, and no less
 In that beloved Vale to which, erelong,
 I was transplanted. Well I call to mind
 ('Twas at an early age, ere I had seen

Nine summers) when upon the mountain slope
 The frost and breath of frosty wind had snapp'd
 The last autumnal crocus, 'twas my joy
 To wander half the night among the Cliffs
 And the smooth Hollows, where the woodcocks ran
 Along the open turf. In thought and wish
 That time, my shoulder all with springes hung,
 I was a fell destroyer. On the heights
 Scudding away from snare to snare, I plied
 My anxious visitation, hurrying on,
 Still hurrying, hurrying onward; moon and stars
 Were shining o'er my head; I was alone,
 And seem'd to be a trouble to the peace
 That was among them. Sometimes it befel
 In these night-wanderings, that a strong desire
 O'erpower'd my better reason, and the bird
 Which was the captive of another's toils
 Became my prey; and, when the deed was done
 I heard among the solitary hills
 Low breathings coming after me, and sounds
 Of undistinguishable motion, steps
 Almost as silent as the turf they trod.
 Nor less in springtime when on southern banks
 The shining sun had from his knot of leaves
 Decoy'd the primrose flower, and when the Vales
 And woods were warm, was I a plunderer then
 In the high places, on the lonesome peaks
 Where'er, among the mountains and the winds,
 The Mother Bird had built her lodge. Though mean
 My object, and inglorious, yet the end
 Was not ignoble. Oh! when I have hung
 Above the raven's nest, by knots of grass
 And half-inch fissures in the slippery rock
 But ill sustain'd, and almost, as it seem'd,
 Suspended by the blast which blew amain,
 Shouldering the naked crag; Oh! at that time,
 While on the perilous ridge I hung alone,
 With what strange utterance did the loud dry wind
 Blow through my ears! the sky seem'd not a sky
 Of earth; and with what motion mov'd the clouds!

THE PRELUDE

The mind of Man is fram'd even like the breath
And harmony of music. There is a dark
Invisible workmanship that reconciles
Discordant elements, and makes them move
In one society. Ah me! that all
The terrors, all the early miseries
Regrets, vexations, lassitudes, that all
The thoughts and feelings which have been infus'd
Into my mind, should ever have made up
The calm existence that is mine when I
Am worthy of myself! Praise to the end!
Thanks likewise for the means! But I believe
That Nature, oftentimes, when she would frame
A favor'd Being, from his earliest dawn
Of infancy doth open up the clouds,
As at the touch of lightning, seeking him
With gentlest visitation; not the less,
Though haply aiming at the self-same end,
Does it delight her sometimes to employ
Severer interventions, ministry
More palpable, and so she dealt with me.

One evening (surely I was led by her)
I went alone into a Shepherd's Boat,
A Skiff that to a Willow tree was tied
Within a rocky Cave, its usual home.
'Twas by the shores of Patterdale, a Vale
Wherein I was a Stranger, thither come
A School-boy Traveller, at the Holidays.
Forth rambled from the Village Inn alone
No sooner had I sight of this small Skiff,
Discover'd thus by unexpected chance,
Than I unloos'd her tether and embark'd.
The moon was up, the Lake was shining clear
Among the hoary mountains; from the Shore
I push'd, and struck the oars and struck again
In cadence, and my little Boat mov'd on
Even like a Man who walks with stately step
Though bent on speed. It was an act of stealth
And troubled pleasure; not without the voice
Of mountain-echoes did my Boat move on,

Leaving behind her still on either side
 Small circles glittering idly in the moon,
 Until they melted all into one track
 Of sparkling light. A rocky Steep uprose
 Above the Cavern of the Willow tree
 And now, as suited one who proudly row'd
 With his best skill, I fix'd a steady view
 Upon the top of that same craggy ridge,
 The bound of the horizon, for behind
 Was nothing but the stars and the grey sky.
 She was an elfin Pinnacle; lustily
 I dipp'd my oars into the silent Lake,
 And, as I rose upon the stroke, my Boat
 Went heaving through the water, like a Swan;
 When from behind the craggy Steep, till then
 The bound of the horizon, a huge Cliff,
 As if with voluntary power instinct,
 Uprear'd its head. I struck, and struck again,
 And, growing still in stature, the huge Cliff
 Rose up between me and the stars, and still,
 With measur'd motion, like a living thing,
 Strode after me. With trembling hands I turn'd,
 And through the silent water stole my way
 Back to the Cavern of the Willow Tree.
 There, in her mooring-place, I left my Bark,
 And, through the meadows homeward went, with grave
 And serious thoughts; and after I had seen
 That spectacle, for many days, my brain
 Work'd with a dim and undetermin'd sense
 Of unknown modes of being; in my thoughts
 There was a darkness, call it solitude,
 Or blank desertion, no familiar shapes
 Of hourly objects, images of trees,
 Of sea or sky, no colours of green fields;
 But huge and mighty Forms that do not live
 Like living men mov'd slowly through the mind
 By day and were the trouble of my dreams.

Wisdom and Spirit of the universe!
 Thou Soul that art the eternity of thought!
 That giv'st to forms and images a breath

And everlasting motion! not in vain,
 By day or star-light thus from my first dawn
 Of Childhood didst Thou intertwine for me
 The passions that build up our human Soul,
 Not with the mean and vulgar works of Man,
 But with high objects, with enduring things,
 With life and nature, purifying thus
 The elements of feeling and of thought,
 And sanctifying, by such discipline,
 Both pain and fear, until we recognise
 A grandeur in the beatings of the heart.

Nor was this fellowship vouchsaf'd to me
 With stinted kindness. In November days,
 When vapours, rolling down the valleys, made
 A lonely scene more lonesome; among woods
 At noon, and 'mid the calm of summer nights,
 When, by the margin of the trembling Lake,
 Beneath the gloomy hills I homeward went
 In solitude, such intercourse was mine;
 'Twas mine among the fields both day and night,
 And by the waters all the summer long.

And in the frosty season, when the sun
 Was set, and visible for many a mile
 The cottage windows through the twilight blaz'd,
 I heeded not the summons:—happy time
 It was, indeed, for all of us; to me
 It was a time of rapture: clear and loud
 The village clock toll'd six; I wheel'd about,
 Proud and exulting, like an untired horse,
 That cares not for his home.—All shod with steel,
 We hiss'd along the polish'd ice, in games
 Confederate, imitative of the chace,
 And woodland pleasures, the resounding horn,
 The Pack loud bellowing, and the hunted hare.
 So through the darkness and the cold we flew,
 And not a voice was idle; with the din,
 Meanwhile, the precipices rang aloud,
 The leafless trees, and every icy crag
 Tinkled like iron, while the distant hills

Into the tumult sent an alien sound
 Of melancholy, not unnoticed, while the stars,
 Eastward, were sparkling clear, and in the west
 The orange sky of evening died away.

Not seldom from the uproar I retired
 Into a silent bay, or sportively
 Glanced sideways, leaving the tumultuous throng,
 To cut across the image of a star
 That gleam'd upon the ice: and oftentimes
 When we had given our bodies to the wind,
 And all the shadowy banks, on either side,
 Came sweeping through the darkness, spinning still
 The rapid line of motion; then at once
 Have I, reclining back upon my heels,
 Stopp'd short, yet still the solitary Cliffs
 Wheeled by me, even as if the earth had roll'd
 With visible motion her diurnal round;
 Behind me did they stretch in solemn train
 Feebler and feebler, and I stood and watch'd
 Till all was tranquil as a dreamless sleep.

Ye Presences of Nature, in the sky
 And on the earth! Ye Visions of the hills!
 And Souls of lonely places! can I think
 A vulgar hope was yours when Ye employ'd
 Such ministry, when Ye through many a year
 Haunting me thus among my boyish sports,
 On caves and trees, upon the woods and hills,
 Impress'd upon all forms the characters
 Of danger or desire, and thus did make
 The surface of the universal earth
 With triumph, and delight, and hope, and fear,
 Work like a sea?

Not uselessly employ'd,
 I might pursue this theme through every change
 Of exercise and play, to which the year
 Did summon us in its delightful round.

We were a noisy crew, the sun in heaven
 Beheld not vales more beautiful than ours,

Nor saw a race in happiness and joy
 More worthy of the ground where they were sown.
 I would record with no reluctant voice
 The woods of autumn and their hazel bowers
 With milk-white clusters hung; the rod and line,
 True symbol of the foolishness of hope,
 Which with its strong enchantment led us on
 By rocks and pools, shut out from every star
 All the green summer, to forlorn cascades
 Among the windings of the mountain brooks.
 —Unfading recollections! at this hour
 The heart is almost mine with which I felt
 From some hill-top, on sunny afternoons
 The Kite high up among the fleecy clouds
 Pull at its rein, like an impatient Courser,
 Or, from the meadows sent on gusty days,
 Beheld her breast the wind, then suddenly
 Dash'd headlong; and rejected by the storm.

Ye lowly Cottages in which we dwelt,
 A ministration of your own was yours,
 A sanctity, a safeguard, and a love!
 Can I forget you, being as you were
 So beautiful among the pleasant fields
 In which ye stood? Or can I here forget
 The plain and seemly countenance with which
 Ye dealt out your plain comforts? Yet had ye
 Delights and exultations of your own.
 Eager and never weary we pursued
 Our home amusements by the warm peat-fire
 At evening; when with pencil and with slate,
 In square divisions parcell'd out, and all
 With crosses and with cyphers scribbled o'er,
 We schemed and puzzled, head opposed to head
 In strife too humble to be named in Verse.
 Or round the naked table, snow-white deal,
 Cherry or maple, sate in close array,
 And to the combat, Loo or Whist, led on
 A thick-ribbed Army; not as in the world
 Neglected and ungratefully thrown by
 Even for the very service they had wrought,

But husbanded through many a long campaign.
 Uncouth assemblage was it, where no few
 Had changed their functions, some, plebeian cards,
 Which Fate beyond the promise of their birth
 Had glorified, and call'd to represent
 The persons of departed Potentates.
 Oh! with what echoes on the Board they fell!
 Ironie Diamonds, Clubs, Hearts, Diamonds, Spades,
 A congregation piteously akin.
 Cheap matter did they give to boyish wit,
 Those sooty knaves, precipitated down
 With scoffs and taunts, like Vulcan out of Heaven,
 The paramount Ace, a moon in her eclipse,
 Queens, gleaming through their splendour's last decay,
 And Monarchs, surly at the wrongs sustain'd
 By royal visages. Meanwhile, abroad
 The heavy rain was falling, or the frost
 Raged bitterly, with keen and silent tooth,
 And, interrupting oft the impassion'd game,
 From Esthwaite's neighbouring Lake the splitting ice,
 While it sank down towards the water, sent,
 Among the meadows and the hills, its long
 And dismal yellings, like the noise of wolves
 When they are howling round the Bothnic Main.

Nor, sedulous as I have been to trace
 How Nature by extrinsic passion first
 Peopled my mind with beauteous forms or grand,
 And made me love them, may I here forget
 How other pleasures have been mine, and joys
 Of subtler origin; how I have felt,
 Not seldom, even in that tempestuous time,
 Those hallow'd and pure motions of the sense
 Which seem, in their simplicity, to own
 An intellectual charm, that calm delight
 Which, if I err not, surely must belong
 To those first-born affinities that fit
 Our new existence to existing things,
 And, in our dawn of being, constitute
 The bond of union betwixt life and joy.

Yes, I remember, when the changeful earth,
 And twice five seasons on my mind had stamp'd
 The faces of the moving year, even then,
 A Child, I held unconscious intercourse
 With the eternal Beauty, drinking in
 A pure organic pleasure from the lines
 Of curling mist, or from the level plain
 Of waters colour'd by the steady clouds.

The Sands of Westmoreland, the Creeks and Bays
 Of Cumbria's rocky limits, they can tell
 How when the Sea threw off his evening shade
 And to the Shepherd's huts beneath the crags
 Did send sweet notice of the rising moon,
 How I have stood, to fancies such as these,
 Engrafted in the tenderness of thought,
 A stranger, linking with the spectacle
 No conscious memory of a kindred sight,
 And bringing with me no peculiar sense
 Of quietness or peace, yet I have stood,
 Even while mine eye has mov'd o'er three long leagues
 Of shining water, gathering, as it seem'd,
 Through every hair-breadth of that field of light,
 New pleasure, like a bee among the flowers.

Thus, often in those fits of vulgar joy
 Which, through all seasons, on a child's pursuits
 Are prompt attendants, 'mid that giddy bliss
 Which, like a tempest, works along the blood
 And is forgotten; even then I felt
 Gleams like the flashing of a shield; the earth
 And common face of Nature spake to me
 Rememberable things; sometimes, 'tis true,
 By chance collisions and quaint accidents
 Like those ill-sorted unions, work suppos'd
 Of evil-minded fairies, yet not vain
 Nor profitless, if haply they impress'd
 Collateral objects and appearances,
 Albeit lifeless then, and doom'd to sleep
 Until maturer seasons call'd them forth
 To impregnate and to elevate the mind.

—And if the vulgar joy by its own weight
 Wearied itself out of the memory,
 The scenes which were a witness of that joy
 Remained, in their substantial lineaments
 Depicted on the brain, and to the eye
 Were visible, a daily sight; and thus
 By the impressive discipline of fear,
 By pleasure and repeated happiness,
 So frequently repeated, and by force
 Of obscure feelings representative
 Of joys that were forgotten, these same scenes,
 So beauteous and majestic in themselves,
 Though yet the day was distant, did at length
 Become habitually dear, and all
 Their hues and forms were by invisible links
 Allied to the affections.

I began

My story early, feeling as I fear,
 The weakness of a human love, for days
 Disown'd by memory, ere the birth of spring
 Planting my snowdrops among winter snows.
 Nor will it seem to thee, my Friend! so prompt
 In sympathy, that I have lengthen'd out,
 With fond and feeble tongue, a tedious tale.
 Meanwhile, my hope has been that I might fetch
 Invigorating thoughts from former years,
 Might fix the wavering balance of my mind,
 And haply meet reproaches, too, whose power
 May spur me on, in manhood now mature,
 To honorable toil. Yet should these hopes
 Be vain, and thus should neither I be taught
 To understand myself, nor thou to know
 With better knowledge how the heart was fram'd
 Of him thou lovest, need I dread from thee
 Harsh judgments, if I am so loth to quit
 Those recollected hours that have the charm
 Of visionary things, and lovely forms
 And sweet sensations that throw back our life
 And almost make our Infancy itself
 A visible scene, on which the sun is shining?

One end hereby at least hath been attain'd,
 My mind hath been revived, and if this mood
 Desert me not, I will forthwith bring down,
 Through later years, the story of my life.
 The road lies plain before me; 'tis a theme
 Single and of determined bounds; and hence
 I chuse it rather at this time, than work
 Of ampler or more varied argument.

BOOK SECOND

School-Time—(Continued)

THUS far, O Friend! have we, though leaving much
 Unvisited, endeavour'd to retrace
 My life through its first years, and measured back
 The way I travell'd when I first began
 To love the woods and fields; the passion yet
 Was in its birth, sustain'd, as might befall,
 By nourishment that came unsought; for still,
 From week to week, from month to month, we liv'd
 A round of tumult: duly were our games
 Prolong'd in summer till the day-light fail'd;
 No chair remain'd before the doors, the bench
 And threshold steps were empty; fast asleep
 The Labourer, and the Old Man who had sate,
 A later lingerer, yet the revelry
 Continued, and the loud uproar: at last,
 When all the ground was dark, and the huge clouds
 Were edged with twinkling stars, to bed we went,
 With weary joints, and with a beating mind.
 Ah! is there one who ever has been young,
 Nor needs a monitory voice to tame
 The pride of virtue, and of intellect?
 And is there one, the wisest and the best
 Of all mankind, who does not sometimes wish
 For things which cannot be, who would not give,
 If so he might, to duty and to truth
 The eagerness of infantine desire?
 A tranquillizing spirit presses now

On my corporeal frame: so wide appears
 The vacancy between me and those days,
 Which yet have such self-presence in my mind
 That, sometimes, when I think of them, I seem
 Two consciousnesses, conscious of myself
 And of some other Being. A grey Stone
 Of native rock, left midway in the Square
 Of our small market Village, was the home
 And centre of these joys, and when, return'd
 After long absence, thither I repair'd
 I found that it was split, and gone to build
 A smart Assembly-room that perk'd and flar'd
 With wash and rough-cast elbowing the ground
 Which had been ours. But let the fiddle scream,
 And be ye happy! yet, my Friends! I know
 That more than one of you will think with me
 Of those soft starry nights, and that old Dame
 From whom the stone was nam'd who there had sate
 And watch'd her Table with its huckster's wares
 Assiduous, thro' the length of sixty years.

We ran a boisterous race; the year span round
 With giddy motion. But the time approach'd
 That brought with it a regular desire
 For calmer pleasures, when the beauteous forms
 Of Nature were collaterally attach'd
 To every scheme of holiday delight,
 And every boyish sport, less grateful else,
 And languidly pursued.

When summer came
 It was the pastime of our afternoons
 To beat along the plain of Windermere
 With rival oars, and the selected bourne
 Was now an Island musical with birds
 That sang for ever; now a Sister Isle
 Beneath the oaks' umbrageous covert, sown
 With lillies of the valley, like a field;
 And now a third small Island where remain'd
 An old stone Table, and a moulder'd Cave,
 A Hermit's history. In such a race,
 So ended, disappointment could be none,

Uneasiness, or pain, or jealousy:
 We rested in the shade, all pleas'd alike,
 Conquer'd and Conqueror. Thus the pride of strength,
 And the vain-glory of superior skill
 Were interfus'd with objects which subdu'd
 And temper'd them, and gradually produc'd
 A quiet independence of the heart.
 And to my Friend, who knows me, I may add,
 Unapprehensive of reproof, that hence
 Ensu'd a diffidence and modesty,
 And I was taught to feel, perhaps too much,
 The self-sufficing power of solitude.

No delicate viands sapp'd our bodily strength;
 More than we wish'd we knew the blessing then
 Of vigorous hunger, for our daily meals
 Were frugal, Sabine fare! and then, exclude
 A little weekly stipend, and we lived
 Through three divisions of the quarter'd year
 In pennyless poverty. But now, to School
 Return'd, from the half-yearly holidays,
 We came with purses more profusely fill'd,
 Allowance which abundantly suffic'd
 To gratify the palate with repasts
 More costly than the Dame of whom I spake,
 That ancient Woman, and her board supplied.
 Hence inroads into distant Vales, and long
 Excursions far away among the hills,
 Hence rustic dinners on the cool green ground,
 Or in the woods, or near a river side,
 Or by some shady fountain, while soft airs
 Among the leaves were stirring, and the sun
 Unfelt, shone sweetly round us in our joy.

Nor is my aim neglected, if I tell
 How twice in the long length of those half-years
 We from our funds, perhaps, with bolder hand
 Drew largely, anxious for one day, at least,
 To feel the motion of the galloping Steed;
 And with the good old Inn-keeper, in truth,
 On such occasion sometimes we employ'd

Sly subterfuge; for the intended bound
 Of the day's journey was too distant far
 For any cautious man, a Structure famed
 Beyond its neighbourhood, the antique Walls
 Of that large Abbey which within the Vale
 Of Nightshade, to St. Mary's honour built,
 Stands yet, a mouldering pile, with fractured Arch,
 Belfry, and Images, and living Trees,
 A holy Scene! along the smooth green turf
 Our Horses grazed: to more than inland peace
 Left by the sea wind passing overhead
 (Though wind of roughest temper) trees and towers
 May in that Valley oftentimes be seen,
 Both silent and both motionless alike;
 Such is the shelter that is there, and such
 The safeguard for repose and quietness.

Our steeds remounted, and the summons given,
 With whip and spur we by the Chauntry flew
 In uncouth race, and left the cross-legg'd Knight,
 And the stone-Abbot, and that single Wren
 Which one day sang so sweetly in the Nave
 Of the old Church, that, though from recent showers
 The earth was comfortless, and, touch'd by faint
 Internal breezes, sobbings of the place,
 And respirations, from the roofless walls
 The shuddering ivy dripp'd large drops, yet still,
 So sweetly 'mid the gloom the invisible Bird
 Sang to itself, that there I could have made
 My dwelling-place, and liv'd for ever there
 To hear such music. Through the Walls we flew
 And down the valley, and a circuit made
 In wantonness of heart, through rough and smooth
 We scamper'd homeward. Oh! ye Rocks and Streams,
 And that still Spirit of the evening air!
 Even in this joyous time I sometimes felt
 Your presence, when with slacken'd step we breath'd
 Along the sides of the steep hills, or when,
 Lighted by gleams of moonlight from the sea,
 We beat with thundering hoofs the level sand.

Upon the Eastern Shore of Windermere,
 Above the crescent of a pleasant Bay,
 There stood an Inn, no homely-featured Shed,
 Brother of the surrounding Cottages,
 But 'twas a splendid place, the door beset
 With Chaises, Grooms, and Liveries, and within
 Decanters, Glasses, and the blood-red Wine.
 In ancient times, or ere the Hall was built
 On the large Island, had this Dwelling been
 More worthy of a Poet's love, a Hut,
 Proud of its one bright fire, and sycamore shade.
 But though the rhymes were gone which once inscribed
 The threshold, and large golden characters
 On the blue-frosted Signboard had usurp'd
 The place of the old Lion, in contempt
 And mockery of the rustic painter's hand,
 Yet to this hour the spot to me is dear
 With all its foolish pomp. The garden lay
 Upon a slope surmounted by the plain
 Of a small Bowling-green; beneath us stood
 A grove; with gleams of water through the trees
 And over the tree-tops; nor did we want
 Refreshment, strawberries and mellow cream.
 And there, through half an afternoon, we play'd
 On the smooth platform, and the shouts we sent
 Made all the mountains ring. But ere the fall
 Of night, when in our pinnace we return'd
 Over the dusky Lake, and to the beach
 Of some small Island steer'd our course with one,
 The Minstrel of our troop, and left him there,
 And row'd off gently, while he blew his flute
 Alone upon the rock; Oh! then the calm
 And dead still water lay upon my mind
 Even with a weight of pleasure, and the sky
 Never before so beautiful, sank down
 Into my heart, and held me like a dream.

Thus daily were my sympathies enlarged,
 And thus the common range of visible things
 Grew dear to me: already I began
 To love the sun, a Boy I lov'd the sun,

Not as I since have lov'd him, as a pledge
 And surety of our earthly life, a light
 Which while we view we feel we are alive;
 But, for this cause, that I had seen him lay
 His beauty on the morning hills, had seen
 The western mountain touch his setting orb,
 In many a thoughtless hour, when, from excess
 Of happiness, my blood appear'd to flow
 With its own pleasure, and I breath'd with joy.
 And from like feelings, humble though intense,
 To patriotic and domestic love
 Analogous, the moon to me was dear;
 For I would dream away my purposes,
 Standing to look upon her while she hung
 Midway between the hills, as if she knew
 No other region; but belong'd to thee,
 Yea, appertain'd by a peculiar right
 To thee and thy grey huts, my darling Vale!

Those incidental charms which first attach'd
 My heart to rural objects, day by day
 Grew weaker, and I hasten on to tell
 How Nature, intervenient till this time,
 And secondary, now at length was sought
 For her own sake. But who shall parcel out
 His intellect, by geometric rules,
 Split, like a province, into round and square?
 Who knows the individual hour in which
 His habits were first sown, even as a seed,
 Who that shall point, as with a wand, and say,
 "This portion of the river of my mind
 Came from yon fountain?" Thou, my Friend! art one
 More deeply read in thy own thoughts; to thee
 Science appears but, what in truth she is,
 Not as our glory and our absolute boast,
 But as a succedaneum, and a prop
 To our infirmity. Thou art no slave
 Of that false secondary power, by which,
 In weakness, we create distinctions, then
 Deem that our puny boundaries are things
 Which we perceive, and not which we have made.

To thee, unblinded by these outward shows,
 The unity of all has been reveal'd
 And thou wilt doubt with me, less aptly skill'd
 Than many are to class the cabinet
 Of their sensations, and, in voluble phrase,
 Run through the history and birth of each,
 As of a single independent thing.
 Hard task to analyse a soul, in which,
 Not only general habits and desires,
 But each most obvious and particular thought,
 Not in a mystical and idle sense,
 But in the words of reason deeply weigh'd,
 Hath no beginning.

Bless'd the infant Babe,
 (For with my best conjectures I would trace
 The progress of our Being) blest the Babe,
 Nurs'd in his Mother's arms, the Babe who sleeps
 Upon his Mother's breast, who, when his soul,
 Doth gather passion from his Mother's eye!
 Such feelings pass into his torpid life
 Like an awakening breeze, and hence his mind
 Even [in the first trial of its powers]
 Is prompt and watchful, eager to combine
 In one appearance, all the elements
 And parts of the same object, else detach'd
 And loth to coalesce. Thus, day by day,
 Subjected to the discipline of love,
 His organs and recipient faculties
 Are quicken'd, are more vigorous, his mind spreads,
 Tenacious of the forms which it receives.
 In one beloved presence, nay and more,
 In that most apprehensive habitude
 And those sensations which have been deriv'd
 From this beloved Presence, there exists
 A virtue which irradiates and exalts
 All objects through all intercourse of sense.
 No outcast he, bewilder'd and depress'd;
 Along his infant veins are interfus'd
 The gravitation and the filial bond
 Of nature, that connect him with the world.
 Emphatically such a Being lives,

An inmate of this *active* universe;
 From nature largely he receives; nor so
 Is satisfied, but largely gives again,
 For feeling has to him imparted strength,
 And powerful in all sentiments of grief,
 Of exultation, fear, and joy, his mind,
 Even as an agent of the one great mind,
 Creates, creator and receiver both,
 Working but in alliance with the works
 Which it beholds.—Such, verily, is the first
 Poetic spirit of our human life;
 By uniform control of after years
 In most abated or suppress'd, in some,
 Through every change of growth or of decay,
 Pre-eminent till death.

From early days,
 Beginning not long after that first time
 In which, a Babe, by intercourse of touch,
 I held mute dialogues with my Mother's heart
 I have endeavour'd to display the means
 Whereby this infant sensibility,
 Great birthright of our Being, was in me
 Augmented and sustain'd. Yet is a path
 More difficult before me, and I fear
 That in its broken windings we shall need
 The chamois' sinews, and the eagle's wing:
 For now a trouble came into my mind
 From unknown causes. I was left alone,
 Seeking the visible world, nor knowing why.
 The props of my affections were remov'd,
 And yet the building stood, as if sustain'd
 By its own spirit! All that I beheld
 Was dear to me, and from this cause it came,
 That now to Nature's finer influxes
 My mind lay open, to that more exact
 And intimate communion which our hearts
 Maintain with the minuter properties
 Of objects which already are lov'd,
 And of those only. Many are the joys
 Of youth; but oh! what happiness to live
 When every hour brings palpable access

Of knowledge, when all knowledge is delight,
 And sorrow is not there. The seasons came,
 And every season to my notice brought
 A store of transitory qualities
 Which, but for this most watchful power of love
 Had been neglected, left a register
 Of permanent relations, else unknown,
 Hence life, and change, and beauty, solitude
 More active, even, than "best society,"
 Society made sweet as solitude
 By silent inobtrusive sympathies,
 And gentle agitations of the mind
 From manifold distinctions, difference
 Perceived in things, where to the common eye,
 No difference is; and thence, from the same source
 Sublimer joy; for I would walk alone,
 In storm and tempest, or in starlight nights
 Beneath the quiet Heavens; and, at that time,
 Have felt whate'er there is of power in sound
 To breathe an elevated mood, by form
 Or image unprofaned; and I would stand,
 Beneath some rock, listening to sounds that are
 The ghostly language of the ancient earth,
 Or make their dim abode in distant winds.
 Thence did I drink the visonary power.
 I deem not profitless these fleeting moods
 Of shadowy exultation: not for this,
 That they are kindred to our purer mind
 And intellectual life; but that the soul,
 Remembering how she felt, but what she felt
 Remembering not, retains an obscure sense
 Of possible sublimity, to which,
 With growing faculties she doth aspire,
 With faculties still growing, feeling still
 That whatsoever point they gain, they still
 Have something to pursue.

And not alone,
 In grandeur and in tumult, but no less
 In tranquil scenes, that universal power
 And fitness in the latent qualities
 And essences of things, by which the mind

Is mov'd by feelings of delight, to me
 Came strengthen'd with a superadded soul,
 A virtue not its own. My morning walks
 Were early; oft, before the hours of School
 I travell'd round our little Lake, five miles
 Of pleasant wandering, happy time! more dear
 For this, that one was by my side, a Friend
 Then passionately lov'd; with heart how full
 Will he peruse these lines, this page, perhaps
 A blank to other men! for many years
 Have since flow'd in between us; and our minds,
 Both silent to each other, at this time
 We live as if those hours had never been.
 Nor seldom did I lift our cottage latch
 Far earlier, and before the vernal thrush
 Was audible, among the hills I sate
 Alone, upon some jutting eminence
 At the first hour of morning, when the Vale
 Lay quiet in an utter solitude.
 How shall I trace the history, where seek
 The origin of what I then have felt?
 Oft in these moments such a holy calm
 Did overspread my soul, that I forgot
 That I had bodily eyes, and what I saw
 Appear'd like something in myself, a dream,
 A prospect in my mind.

'Twere long to tell

What spring and autumn, what the winter snows,
 And what the summer shade, what day and night,
 The evening and the morning, what my dreams
 And what my waking thoughts supplied, to nurse
 That spirit of religious love in which
 I walked with Nature. But let this, at least
 Be not forgotten, that I still retain'd
 My first creative sensibility,
 That by the regular action of the world
 My soul was unsubstid'd. A plastic power
 Abode with me, a forming hand, at times
 Rebellious, acting in a devious mood,
 A local spirit of its own, at war
 With general tendency, but for the most

Subservient strictly to the external things
 With which it commun'd. An auxiliar light
 Came from my mind which on the setting sun
 Bestow'd new splendor, the melodious birds,
 The gentle breezes, fountains that ran on,
 Murmuring so sweetly in themselves, obey'd
 A like dominion; and the midnight storm
 Grew darker in the presence of my eye.
 Hence my obeisance, my devotion hence,
 And hence my transport.

Nor should this, perchance,
 Pass unrecorded, that I still had lov'd
 The exercise and produce of a toil
 Than analytic industry to me
 More pleasing, and whose character I deem
 Is more poetic as resembling more
 Creative agency. I mean to speak
 Of that interminable building rear'd
 By observation of affinities
 In objects where no brotherhood exists
 To common minds. My seventeenth year was come
 And, whether from this habit, rooted now
 So deeply in my mind, or from excess
 Of the great social principle of life,
 Coercing all things into sympathy,
 To unorganic natures I transferr'd
 My own enjoyments, or, the power of truth
 Coming in revelation, I convers'd
 With things that really are, I, at this time
 Saw blessing spread around me like a sea.
 Thus did my days pass on, and now at length
 From Nature and her overflowing soul
 I had receiv'd so much that all my thoughts
 Were steep'd in feeling; I was only then
 Contented when with bliss ineffable
 I felt the sentiment of Being spread
 O'er all that moves, and all that seemeth still,
 O'er all, that, lost beyond the reach of thought
 And human knowledge, to the human eye
 Invisible, yet liveth to the heart,
 O'er all that leaps, and runs, and shouts, and sings,

Or beats the gladsome air, o'er all that glides
 Beneath the wave, yea, in the wave itself
 And mighty depth of waters. Wonder not
 If such my transports were; for in all things now
 I saw one life, and felt that it was joy.
 One song they sang, and it was audible,
 Most audible then when the fleshly ear,
 O'ercome by grosser prelude of that strain,
 Forgot its functions, and slept undisturb'd.

If this be error, and another faith
 Find easier access to the pious mind,
 Yet were I grossly destitute of all
 Those human sentiments which make this earth
 So dear, if I should fail, with grateful voice
 To speak of you, Ye Mountains and Ye Lakes,
 And sounding Cataracts! Ye Mists and Winds
 That dwell among the hills where I was born.
 If, in my youth, I have been pure in heart,
 If, mingling with the world, I am content
 With my own modest pleasure, and have liv'd,
 With God and Nature communing, remov'd
 From little enmities and low desires,
 The gift is yours; if in these times of fear,
 This melancholy waste of hopes o'erthrown,
 If, 'mid indifference and apathy
 And wicked exultation, when good men,
 On every side fall off we know not how,
 To selfishness, disguis'd in gentle names
 Of peace, and quiet, and domestic love,
 Yet mingled, not unwillingly, with sneers
 On visionary minds; if in this time
 Of dereliction and dismay, I yet
 Despair not of our nature; but retain
 A more than Roman confidence, a faith
 That fails not, in all sorrow my support,
 The blessing of my life, the gift is yours,
 Ye mountains! thine, O Nature! Thou hast fed
 My lofty speculations; and in thee,
 For this uneasy heart of ours I find
 A never-failing principle of joy,

THE PRELUDE

And purest passion.

Thou, my Friend! wert rear'd
In the great City, 'mid far other scenes;
But we, by different roads at length have gain'd
The self-same bourne. And for this cause to Thee
I speak, unapprehensive of contempt,
The insinuated scoff of coward tongues,
And all that silent language which so oft
In conversation betwixt man and man
Blots from the human countenance all trace
Of beauty and of love. For Thou has sought
The truth in solitude, and Thou art one,
The most intense of Nature's worshippers
In many things my Brother, chiefly here
In this my deep devotion.

Fare Thee well!

Health, and the quiet of a healthful mind
Attend thee! seeking oft the haunts of men,
And yet more often living with Thyself,
And for Thyself, so haply shall thy days
Be many, and a blessing to mankind.

BOOK THIRD

Residence at Cambridge

IT was a dreary morning when the Chaise
Roll'd over the flat Plains of Huntingdon
And, through the open windows, first I saw
The long-back'd Chapel of King's College rear
His pinnacles above the dusky groves.

Soon afterwards, we espied upon the road,
A student cloth'd in Gown and tassell'd Cap;
He pass'd; nor was I master of my eyes
Till he was left a hundred yards behind.
The Place, as we approach'd, seem'd more and more
To have an eddy's force, and suck'd us in
More eagerly at every step we took.
Onward we drove beneath the Castle, down

By Magdalene Bridge we went and cross'd the Cam,
And at the *Hoop* we landed, famous Inn.

My spirit was up, my thoughts were full of hope;
Some Friends I had, acquaintances who there
Seemed Friends, poor simple Schoolboys, now hung round
With honour and importance; in a world
Of welcome faces up and down I rov'd;
Questions, directions, counsel and advice
Flow'd in upon me from all sides, fresh day
Of pride and pleasure! to myself I seem'd
A man of business and expense, and went
From shop to shop about my own affairs,
To Tutors or to Tailors, as befel,
From street to street with loose and careless heart.

I was the Dreamer, they the Dream; I roam'd
Delighted, through the motley spectacle;
Gowns grave or gaudy, Doctors, Students, Streets,
Lamps, Gateways, Flocks of Churches, Courts and Towers:
Strange transformation for a mountain Youth,
A northern Villager. As if by word
Of magic or some Fairy's power, at once
Behold me rich in monies, and attir'd
In splendid clothes, with hose of silk, and hair
Glittering like rimy trees when frost is keen.
My lordly Dressing-gown I pass it by,
With other signs of manhood which supplied
The lack of beard.—The weeks went roundly on,
With invitations, suppers, wine, and fruit,
Smooth housekeeping within, and all without
Liberal and suiting Gentleman's array!

The Evangelist St. John my Patron was,
Three gloomy Courts are his; and in the first
Was my abiding-place, a nook obscure!
Right underneath, the College kitchens made
A humming sound, less tuneable than bees,
But hardly less industrious; with shrill notes
Of sharp command and scolding intermix'd.
Near me was Trinity's loquacious Clock,

Who never let the Quarters, night or day,
 Slip by him unproclaim'd, and told the hours
 Twice over with a male and female voice.
 Her pealing organ was my neighbour too;
 And, from my Bedroom, I in moonlight nights
 Could see, right opposite, a few yards off,
 The Antechapel, where the Statue stood
 Of Newton, with his Prism and silent Face.

Of College labours, of the Lecturer's Room,
 All studded round, as thick as chairs could stand,
 With loyal Students, faithful to their Books,
 Half-and-half Idlers, hardy Recusants,
 And honest Dunces;—of important Days,
 Examinations, when the Man was weigh'd
 As in the balance,—of excessive hopes,
 Tremblings withal, and commendable fears,
 Small jealousies, and triumphs good or bad
 I make short mention; things they were which then
 I did not love, nor do I love them now.
 Such glory was but little sought by me,
 And little won. But it is right to say
 That even so early, from the first crude days
 Of settling-time in this my new abode,
 Not seldom I had melancholy thoughts,
 From personal and family regards,
 Wishing to hope without a hope; some fears
 About my future worldly maintenance,
 And, more than all, a strangeness in my mind,
 A feeling that I was not for that hour,
 Nor for that place. But wherefore be cast down?
 Why should I grieve? I was a chosen Son.
 For hither I had come with holy powers
 And faculties, whether to work or feel:
 To apprehend all passions and all moods
 Which time, and place, and season do impress
 Upon the visible universe, and work
 Like changes there by force of my own mind.
 I was a Freeman; in the purest sense
 Was free, and to majestic ends was strong.
 I do not speak of learning, moral truth,

Or understanding; 'twas enough for me
 To know that I was otherwise endow'd.
 When the first glitter of the show was pass'd,
 And the first dazzle of the taper light,
 As if with a rebound my mind return'd
 Into its former self. Oft did I leave
 My Comrades, and the Crowd, Buildings and Groves,
 And walked along the fields, the level fields,
 With Heaven's blue concave rear'd above my head;
 And now it was, that, from such change entire
 And this first absence from those shapes sublime
 Wherewith I had been conversant, my mind
 Seem'd busier in itself than heretofore;
 At least, I more directly recognised
 My powers and habits: let me dare to speak
 A higher language, say that now I felt
 The strength and consolation which were mine.
 As if awaken'd, summon'd, rous'd, constrain'd,
 I look'd for universal things; perused
 The common countenance of earth and heaven;
 And, turning the mind in upon itself,
 Pored, watch'd, expected, listen'd; spread my thoughts
 And spread them with a wider creeping; felt
 Incumbencies more awful, visitings
 Of the Upholder of the tranquil Soul,
 Which underneath all passion lives secure
 A steadfast life. But peace! it is enough
 To notice that I was ascending now
 To such community with highest truth.

A track pursuing not untrod before,
 From deep analogies by thought supplied,
 Or consciousnesses not to be subdued,
 To every natural form, rock, fruit or flower,
 Even the loose stones that cover the high-way,
 I gave a moral life, I saw them feel,
 Or link'd them to some feeling: the great mass
 Lay bedded in a quickening soul, and all
 That I beheld respired with inward meaning.
 Thus much for the one Presence, and the Life
 Of the great whole; suffice it here to add

THE PRELUDE

That whatsoe'er of Terror or of Love,
Or Beauty, Nature's daily face put on
From transitory passion, unto this
I was as wakeful, even, as waters are
To the sky's motion; in a kindred sense
Of passion was obedient as a lute
That waits upon the touches of the wind.
So was it with me in my solitude;
So often among multitudes of men,
Unknown, unthought of, yet I was most rich,
I had a world about me; 'twas my own,
I made it; for it only liv'd to me,
And to the God who look'd into my mind.
Such sympathies would sometimes shew themselves
By outward gestures and by visible looks.
Some call'd it madness; such, indeed, it was,
If child-like fruitfulness in passing joy,
If steady moods of thoughtfulness, matur'd
To inspiration, sort with such a name;
If prophecy be madness; if things view'd
By Poets in old time, and higher up
By the first men, earth's first inhabitants,
May in these tutor'd days no more be seen
With undisorder'd sight; but leaving this
It was no madness: for I had an eye
Which in my strongest workings, evermore
Was looking for the shades of difference
As they lie hid in all exterior forms,
Near or remote, minute or vast, an eye
Which from a stone, a tree, a wither'd leaf,
To the broad ocean and the azure heavens,
Spangled with kindred multitudes of stars,
Could find no surface where its power might sleep,
Which spake perpetual logic to my soul,
And by an unrelenting agency
Did bind my feelings, even as in a chain.

And here, O Friend! have I retrac'd my life
Up to an eminence, and told a tale
Of matters which, not falsely, I may call
The glory of my youth. Of Genius, Power,

Creation and Divinity itself

I have been speaking, for my theme has been
 What pass'd within me. Not of outward things
 Done visibly for other minds, words, signs,
 Symbols or actions; but of my own heart
 Have I been speaking, and my youthful mind.
 O Heavens! how awful is the might of Souls,
 And what they do within themselves, while yet
 The yoke of earth is new to them, the world
 Nothing but a wild field where they were sown.
 This is, in truth, heroic argument,
 And genuine prowess; which I wish'd to touch
 With hand however weak; but in the main
 It lies far hidden from the reach of words.
 Points have we all of us within our souls,
 Where all stand single; this I feel, and make
 Breathings for incommunicable powers.
 Yet each man is a memory to himself,
 And, therefore, now that I must quit this theme,
 I am not heartless; for there's not a man
 That lives who hath not had his godlike hours,
 And knows not what majestic sway we have,
 As natural beings in the strength of nature.

Enough: for now into a populous Plain
 We must descend.—A Traveller I am,
 And all my Tale is of myself; even so,
 So be it, if the pure in heart delight
 To follow me; and Thou, O honor'd Friend!
 Who in my thoughts art ever at my side,
 Uphold, as heretofore, my fainting steps.

It hath been told already, how my sight
 Was dazzled by the novel show, and how,
 Erelong, I did into myself return.
 So did it seem, and so, in truth, it was.
 Yet this was but short liv'd: thereafter came
 Observance less devout. I had made a change
 In climate; and my nature's outward coat
 Changed also, slowly and insensibly.
 To the deep quiet and majestic thoughts

THE PRELUDE

Of loneliness succeeded empty noise
And superficial pastimes; now and then
Forced labour; and, more frequently, forced hopes;
And, worse than all, a treasonable growth
Of indecisive judgments that impair'd
And shook the mind's simplicity. And yet
This was a gladsome time. Could I behold,
Who less insensible than sodden clay
On a sea River's bed at ebb of tide,
Could have beheld with undelighted heart,
So many happy Youths, so wide and fair
A congregation, in its budding-time
Of health, and hope, and beauty; all at once
So many divers samples of the growth
Of life's sweet season, could have seen unmov'd
That miscellaneous garland of wild flowers
Upon the matron temples of a Place
So famous through the world? To me, at least,
It was a goodly prospect: for, through youth,
Though I had been train'd up to stand unpropp'd,
And independent musings pleased me so
That spells seem'd on me when I was alone,
Yet could I only cleave to solitude
In lonesome places; if a throng was near
That way I lean'd by nature; for my heart
Was social, and lov'd idleness and joy.

Not seeking those who might participate
My deeper pleasures (nay I had not once,
Though not unused to mutter lonesome songs,
Even with myself divided such delight,
Or looked that way for aught that might be cloath'd
In human language), easily I pass'd
From the remembrances of better things,
And slipp'd into the weekday works of youth,
Unburthen'd, unalarm'd, and unprofan'd.
Caverns there were within my mind, which sun
Could never penetrate, yet did there not
Want store of leafy arbours where the light
Might enter in at will. Companionships,
Friendships, acquaintances, were welcome all;

We saunter'd, play'd, we rioted, we talk'd
 Unprofitable talk at morning hours,
 Drifted about along the streets and walks,
 Read lazily in lazy books, went forth
 To gallop through the country in blind zeal
 Of senseless horsemanship, or on the breast
 Of Cam sail'd boisterously; and let the stars
 Come out, perhaps without one quiet thought.

Such was the tenor of the opening act
 In this new life. Imagination slept,
 And yet not utterly. I could not print
 Ground where the grass had yielded to the steps
 Of generations of illustrious Men,
 Unmov'd; I could not always lightly pass
 Through the same Gateways; sleep where they had slept,
 Wake where they wak'd, range that enclosure old
 That garden of great intellects undisturb'd.
 Place also by the side of this dark sense
 Of nobler feeling, that those spiritual Men,
 Even the great Newton's own etherial Self,
 Seem'd humbled in these precincts; thence to be
 The more belov'd; invested here with tasks
 Of life's plain business, as a daily garb;
 Dictators at the plough, a change that left
 All genuine admiration unimpair'd.

Beside the pleasant Mills of Trompington
 I laugh'd with Chaucer; in the hawthorn shade
 Heard him (while birds were warbling) tell his tales
 Of amorous passion. And that gentle Bard,
 Chosen by the Muses for their Page of State,
 Sweet Spenser, moving through his clouded heaven
 With the moon's beauty and the moon's soft pace,
 I call'd him Brother, Englishman, and Friend.
 Yea, our blind Poet, who, in his later day,
 Stood almost single, uttering odious truth,
 Darkness before, and danger's voice behind;
 Soul awful! if the earth has ever lodg'd
 An awful Soul, I seem'd to see him here

Familiarly, and in his Scholar's dress
 Bounding before me, yet a stripling Youth,
 A Boy, no better, with his rosy cheeks
 Angelical, keen eye, courageous look,
 And conscious step of purity and pride.

Among the band of my Compeers was one
 My class-fellow at School, whose chance it was
 To lodge in the Apartments which had been,
 Time out of mind, honor'd by Milton's name;
 The very shell reputed of the abode
 Which he had tenanted. O temperate Bard!
 One afternoon, the first time I set foot
 In this thy innocent Nest and Oratory,
 Seated with others in a festive ring
 Of common-place convention, I to thee
 Pour'd out libations, to thy memory drank,
 Within my private thoughts, till my brain reel'd
 Never so clouded by the fumes of wine
 Before that hour, or since. Thence forth I ran
 From that assembly, through a length of streets,
 Ran, Ostrich-like, to reach our Chapel Door
 In not a desperate or opprobrious time,
 Albeit long after the importunate Bell
 Had stopp'd, with wearisome Cassandra voice
 No longer haunting the dark winter night.
 Call back, O Friend! a moment to thy mind,
 The place itself and fashion of the rites.
 Upshouldering in a dislocated lump,
 With shallow ostentatious carelessness,
 My Surplice, gloried in, and yet despised,
 I clove in pride through the inferior throng
 Of the plain Burghers, who in audience stood
 Of the last skirts of their permitted ground,
 Beneath the pealing Organ. Empty thoughts!
 I am ashamed of them; and that great Bard,
 And thou, O Friend! who in thy ample mind
 Hast station'd me for reverence and love,
 Ye will forgive the weakness of that hour
 In some of its unworthy vanities,
 Brother of many more.

In this mix'd sort

The months pass'd on, remissly, not given up
 To wilful alienation from the right,
 Or walks of open scandal; but in vague
 And loose indifference, easy likings, aims
 Of a low pitch; duty and zeal dismiss'd,
 Yet nature, or a happy course of things
 Not doing in her stead the needful work.
 The memory languidly revolv'd, the heart
 Repos'd in noontide rest; the inner pulse
 Of contemplation almost fail'd to beat.
 Rotted as by a charm, my life became
 A floating island, an amphibious thing,
 Unsound, of spongy texture, yet withal,
 Not wanting a fair face of water-weeds
 And pleasant flowers.—The thirst of living praise,
 A reverence for the glorious Dead, the sight
 Of those long Vistas, Catacombs in which
 Perennial minds lie visibly entomb'd,
 Have often stirr'd the heart of youth, and bred
 A fervent love of rigorous discipline.
 Alas! such high commotion touched not me;
 No look was in these walls to put to shame
 My easy spirits, and discountenance
 Their light composure, far less to instil
 A calm resolve of mind, firmly address'd
 To puissant efforts. Nor was this the blame
 Of others but my own; I should, in truth,
 As far as doth concern my single self
 Misdemean most widely, lodging it elsewhere.
 For I, bred up in Nature's lap, was even
 As a spoil'd Child; and rambling like the wind
 As I had done in daily intercourse
 With those delicious rivers, solemn heights,
 And mountains; ranging like a fowl of the air,
 I was ill tutor'd for captivity,
 To quit my pleasure, and from month to month,
 Take up a station calmly on the perch
 Of sedentary peace. Those lovely forms
 Had also left less space within my mind,
 Which, wrought upon instinctively, had found

THE PRELUDE

A freshness in those objects of its love,
A winning power, beyond all other power.
Not that I slighted Books; that were to lack
All sense; but other passions had been mine,
More fervent, making me less prompt, perhaps,
To in-door study than was wise or well
Or suited to my years. Yet I could shape
The image of a Place which, sooth'd and lull'd
As I had been, train'd up in paradise
Among sweet garlands and delightful sounds,
Accustom'd in my loneliness to walk
With Nature magisterially, yet I,
Methinks, could shape the image of a Place
Which with its aspect should have bent me down
To instantaneous service, should at once
Have made me pay to science and to arts
And written lore, acknowledg'd my liege Lord,
A homage, frankly offer'd up, like that
Which I had paid to Nature. Toil and pains
In this recess which I have bodied forth
Should spread from heart to heart; and stately groves,
Majestic edifices, should not want
A corresponding dignity within.
The congregating temper, which pervades
Our unripe years, not wasted, should be made
To minister to works of high attempt,
Which the enthusiast would perform with love;
Youth should be aw'd, possess'd, as with a sense
Religious, of what holy joy there is
In knowledge, if it be sincerely sought
For its own sake, in glory, and in praisie,
If but by labour won, and to endure.
The passing Day should learn to put aside
Her trappings here, should strip them off, abash'd
Before antiquity, and steadfast truth,
And strong book-mindedness; and over all
Should be a healthy, sound simplicity,
A seemly plainness, name it what you will,
Republican or pious.

If these thoughts
Be a gratuitous emblazonry

That does but mock this recreant age, at least
 Let Folly and False-seeming, we might say,
 Be free to affect whatever formal gait
 Of moral or scholastic discipline
 Shall raise them highest in their own esteem;
 Let them parade, among the Schools, at will;
 But spare the House of God. Was ever known
 The witless Shepherd who would drive his Flock
 With serious repetition to a pool
 Of which 'tis plain to sight they never taste?
 A weight must surely hang on days begun
 And ended with worst mockery: be wise,
 Ye Presidents and Deans, and to your Bells
 Give seasonable rest; for 'tis a sound
 Hollow as ever vex'd the tranquil air;
 And your officious doings bring disgrace
 On the plain Steeples of our English Church,
 Whose worship 'mid remotest village trees
 Suffers for this. Even Science, too, at hand
 In daily sight of such irreverence,
 Is smitten thence with an unnatural taint,
 Loses her just authority, falls beneath
 Collateral suspicion, else unknown.
 This obvious truth did not escape me then,
 Unthinking as I was, and I confess
 That, having in my native hills given loose
 To a Schoolboy's dreaming, I had rais'd a pile
 Upon the basis of the coming time,
 Which now before me melted fast away,
 Which could not live, scarcely had life enough
 To mock the Builder. Oh! what joy it were
 To see a Sanctuary for our Country's Youth,
 With such a spirit in it as might be
 Protection for itself, a Virgin grove,
 Primaeval in its purity and depth;
 Where, though the shades were fill'd with chearfulness,
 Nor indigent of songs, warbled from crowds
 In under-coverts, yet the countenance
 Of the whole place should bear a stamp of awe;
 A habitation sober and demure
 For ruminating creatures, a domain

For quiet things to wander in, a haunt
 In which the Heron might delight to feed
 By the shy rivers, and the Pelican
 Upon the cypress spire in lonely thought
 Might sit and sun himself. Alas! alas!
 In vain for such solemnity we look;
 Our eyes are cross'd by Butterflies, our ears
 Hear chattering Popinjays; the inner heart
 Is trivial, and the impresses without
 Are of a gaudy region.

Different sight

Those venerable Doctors saw of old
 When all who dwelt within these famous Walls
 Led in abstemiousness a studious life,
 When, in forlorn and naked chambers coop'd
 And crowded, o'er the ponderous Books they sate
 Like caterpillars eating out their way
 In silence, or with keen devouring noise
 Not to be track'd or father'd. Princes then
 At matins froze, and couch'd at curfew-time,
 Trained up, through piety and zeal, to prize
 Spare diet, patient labour, and plain weeds.
 O Seat of Arts! renown'd throughout the world,
 Far differing service in those homely days
 The Nurslings of the Muses underwent
 From their first childhood; in that glorious time,
 When Learning, like a Stranger come from far,
 Sounding through Christian Lands her Trumpet, rous'd
 The Peasant and the King; when Boys and Youths,
 The growth of ragged villages and huts,
 Forsook their homes, and, errant in the quest
 Of Patron, famous School or friendly Nook,
 Where, pension'd, they in shelter might sit down,
 From Town to Town and through wide-scatter'd Realms
 Journeyed with their huge folios in their hands;
 And often, starting from some covert place,
 Saluted the chance-comer on the road,
 Crying, "an obolus, a penny give
 To a poor Scholar"; when illustrious Men,
 Lovers of truth, by penury constrain'd,
 Bucer, Erasmus, or Melancthon read

Before the doors or windows of their Cells
By moonshine, through mere lack of taper light.

But peace to vain regrets! We see but darkly
Even when we look behind us; and best things
Are not so pure by nature that they needs
Must keep to all, as fondly all believe,
Their highest promise. If the Mariner,
When at reluctant distance he hath pass'd
Some fair enticing Island, did but know
What fate might have been his, could he have brought
His Bark to land upon the wished-for spot,
Good cause full often would be his to bless
The belt of churlish Surf that scared him thence,
Or haste of the inexorable wind.
For me, I grieve not; happy is the man,
Who only misses what I miss'd, who falls
No lower than I fell.

I did not love,
As hath been noticed heretofore, the guise
Of our scholastic studies; could have wish'd
The river to have had an ampler range,
And freer pace; but this I tax not; far
Far more I griev'd to see among the Band
Of those who in the field of contest stood
As combatants, passions that did to me
Seem low and mean; from ignorance of mine,
In part, and want of just forbearance, yet
My wiser mind grieves now for what I saw.
Willingly did I part from these, and turn
Out of their track, to travel with the shoal
Of more unthinking Natures; easy Minds
And pillowy; and not wanting love that makes
The day pass lightly on, when foresight sleeps,
And wisdom, and the pledges interchanged
With our own inner being are forgot.

To Books, our daily fare prescrib'd, I turn'd
With sickly appetite, and when I went,
At other times, in quest of my own food,
I chaced not steadily the manly deer,

THE PRELUDE

But laid me down to any casual feast
Of wild wood-honey; or, with truant eyes
Unruly, peep'd about for vagrant fruit.
And, as for what pertains to human life,
The deeper passions working round me here,
Whether of envy, jealousy, pride, shame,
Ambition, emulation, fear, or hope,
Or those of dissolute pleasure, were by me
Unshar'd; and only now and then observ'd,
So little was their hold upon my being,
As outward things that might administer
To knowledge or instruction. Hush'd, meanwhile,
Was the under soul, lock'd up in such a calm,
That not a leaf of the great nature stirr'd.

Yet was this deep vacation not given up
To utter waste. Hitherto I had stood
In my own mind remote from human life,
At least from what we commonly so name,
Even as a shepherd on a promontory,
Who, lacking occupation, looks far forth
Into the endless sea, and rather makes
Than finds what he beholds. And sure it is
That this first transit from the smooth delights,
And wild outlandish walks of simple youth,
To something that resembled an approach
Towards mortal business; to a privileg'd world
Within a world, a midway residence
With all its intervenient imagery,
Did better suit my visionary mind,
Far better, than to have been bolted forth,
Thrust out abruptly into Fortune's way
Among the conflicts of substantial life;
By a more just gradation did lead on
To higher things, more naturally matur'd,
For permanent possession, better fruits
Whether of truth or virtue, to ensue.

In playful zest of fancy did we note,
(How could we less?) the manners and the ways
Of those who in the livery were array'd

Of good or evil fame; of those with whom
 By frame of academic discipline
 Perforce we were connected, men whose sway
 And whose authority of Office serv'd
 To set our minds on edge, and did no more.
 Nor wanted we rich pastime of this kind,
 Found everywhere; but chiefly, in the ring
 Of the grave Elders, Men unscour'd, grotesque
 In character; trick'd out like aged trees
 Which, through the lapse of their infirmity,
 Give ready place to any random seed
 That chuses to be rear'd upon their trunks.

Here on my view, confronting as it were
 Those Shepherd Swains whom I had lately left,
 Did flash a different image of old age;
 How different! yet both withal alike,
 A Book of rudiments for the unpractis'd sight,
 Objects emboss'd! and which with sedulous care
 Nature holds up before the eye of Youth
 In her great School; with further view, perhaps,
 To enter early on her tender scheme
 Of teaching comprehension with delight,
 And mingling playful with pathetic thoughts.

The surfaces of artificial life
 And manners finely spun, the delicate race
 Of colours, lurking, gleaming up and down
 Through that state arras woven with silk and gold;
 This wily interchange of snaky hues,
 Willingly and unwillingly reveal'd
 I had not learn'd to watch, and at this time
 Perhaps, had such been in my daily sight
 I might have been indifferent thereto
 As Hermits are to tales of distant things.
 Hence for those rarities elaborate
 Having no relish yet, I was content
 With the more homely produce, rudely pil'd
 In this our coarser warehouse. At this day
 I smile in many a mountain solitude
 At passages and fragments that remain

THE PRELUDE

Of that inferior exhibition, play'd
By wooden images, a theatre
For Wake or Fair. And oftentimes do flit
Remembrances before me of old Men,
Old Humourists who have been long in their graves,
And having almost in my mind put off
Their human names, have into Phantoms pass'd
Of texture midway betwixt life and books.

I play the loiterer: 'tis enough to note
That here, in dwarf proportions, were express'd
The limbs of the great world, its goings on
Collaterally pourtray'd, as in mock fight,
A Tournament of blows, some hardly dealt,
Though short of mortal combat; and whate'er
Might in this pageant be suppos'd to hit
An artless Rustic's notice, this way less,
More that way, was not wasted upon me.
—And yet this spectacle may well demand
A more substantial name, no mimic shew,
Itself a living part of a live whole,
A creek of the vast sea. For all Degrees
And Shapes of spurious fame and short-liv'd praise
Here sate in state, and fed with daily alms
Retainers won away from solid good;
And here was Labour, his own Bond-slave, Hope
That never set the pains against the prize,
Idleness, halting with his weary clog,
And poor misguided Shame, and witless Fear,
And simple Pleasure, foraging for Death,
Honour misplaced, and Dignity astray;
Feuds, Factions, Flatteries, Enmity, and Guile,
Murmuring Submission, and bald Government;
The Idol weak as the Idolater;
And Decency and Custom starving Truth;
And blind Authority, beating with his Staff
The Child that might have led him; Emptiness
Followed, as of good omen; and meek Worth
Left to itself unheard of, and unknown.

Of these and other kindred notices
I cannot say what portion is in truth

The naked recollection of that time,
 And what may rather have been call'd to life
 By after-meditation. But delight,
 That, in an easy temper lull'd asleep,
 Is still with innocence its own reward,
 This surely was not wanting. Carelessly
 I gaz'd, roving as through a Cabinet
 Or wide Museum (throng'd with fishes, gems,
 Birds, crocodiles, shells) where little can be seen
 Well understood, or naturally endear'd,
 Yet still does every step bring something forth
 That quickens, pleases, stings; and here and there
 A casual rarity is singled out,
 And has its brief perusal, then gives way
 To others, all supplanted in their turn.
 Meanwhile, amid this gaudy Congress, fram'd
 Of things, by nature, most unneighbourly,
 The head turns round, and cannot right itself;
 And, though an aching and a barren sense
 Of gay confusion still be uppermost,
 With few wise longings and but little love,
 Yet something to the memory sticks at last,
 Whence profit may be drawn in times to come.

Thus in submissive idleness, my Friend,
 The labouring time of Autumn, Winter, Spring,
 Nine months, roll'd pleasingly away; the tenth
 Return'd me to my native hills again.

BOOK FOURTH

Summer Vacation

A PLEASANT sight it was when, having clomb
 The Heights of Kendal, and that dreary Moor
 Was cross'd, at length, as from a rampart's edge,
 I overlook'd the bed of Windermere.
 I bounded down the hill, shouting amain
 A lusty summons to the farther shore
 For the old Ferryman; and when he came

THE PRELUDE

I did not step into the well-known Boat
Without a cordial welcome. Thence right forth
I took my way, now drawing towards home,
To that sweet Valley where I had been rear'd;
'Twas but a short hour's walk ere, veering round,
I saw the snow-white Church upon its hill
Sit like a thronèd Lady, sending out
A gracious look all over its domain.
Glad greetings had I, and some tears, perhaps,
From my old Dame, so motherly and good;
While she perus'd me with a Parent's pride.
The thoughts of gratitude shall fall like dew
Upon thy grave, good Creature! While my heart
Can beat I never will forget thy name.
Heaven's blessing be upon thee where thou liest,
After thy innocent and busy stir
In narrow cares, thy little daily growth
Of calm enjoyments, after eighty years,
And more than eighty, of untroubled life,
Childless, yet by the strangers to thy blood
Honour'd with little less than filial love.
Great joy was mine to see thee once again,
Thee and thy dwelling; and a throng of things
About its narrow precincts all belov'd,
And many of them seeming yet my own.
Why should I speak of what a thousand hearts
Have felt, and every man alive can guess?
The rooms, the court, the garden were not left
Long unsaluted, and the spreading Pine
And broad stone Table underneath its boughs,
Our summer seat in many a festive hour;
And that unruly child of mountain birth,
The froward Brook, which soon as he was box'd
Within our Garden, found himself at once,
As if by trick insidious and unkind,
Stripp'd of his voice, and left to dimple down
Without an effort and without a will,
A channel paved by the hand of man.
I look'd at him, and smil'd, and smil'd again,
And in the press of twenty thousand thoughts,
"Ha," quoth I, "pretty Prisoner, are you there!"

And now, reviewing soberly that hour,
 I marvel that a fancy did not flash
 Upon me, and a strong desire, straitway,
 At sight of such an emblem that shew'd forth
 So aptly my late course of even days
 And all their smooth enthrallment, to pen down
 A satire on myself. My aged Dame
 Was with me, at my side: She guided me;
 I willing, nay—nay—wishing to be led.
 —The face of every neighbour whom I met
 Was as a volume to me; some I hail'd
 Far off, upon the road, or at their work,
 Unceremonious greetings, interchang'd
 With half the length of a long field between.
 Among my Schoolfellows I scatter'd round
 A salutation that was more constrain'd,
 Though earnest, doubtless with a little pride,
 But with more shame, for my habiliments,
 The transformation, and the gay attire.

Delighted did I take my place again
 At our domestic Table: and, dear Friend!
 Relating simply as my wish hath been
 A Poet's history, can I leave untold
 The joy with which I laid me down at night
 In my accustomed bed, more welcome now
 Perhaps, than if it had been more desir'd
 Or been more often thought of with regret?
 That bed whence I had heard the roaring wind
 And clamorous rain, that bed where I, so oft,
 Had lain awake, on breezy nights, to watch
 The moon in splendour couch'd among the leaves
 Of a tall ash, that near our cottage stood,
 Had watch'd her with fix'd eyes, while to and fro
 In the dark summit of the moving Tree
 She rock'd with every impulse of the wind.

Among the faces which it pleas'd me well
 To see again, was one, by ancient right
 Our Inmate, a rough Terrier of the hills,
 By birth and call of Nature pre-ordain'd

THE PRELUDE

To hunt the badger, and unearth the fox,
Among the impervious crags; but, having been
From youth our own adopted, he had pass'd
Into a gentler service. And when first
The boyish spirit flagg'd, and day by day
Along my veins I kindled with the stir,
The fermentation and the vernal heat
Of Poesy, affecting private shades
Like a sick lover, then this Dog was used
To watch me, an attendant and a friend
Obsequious to my steps, early and late,
Though often of such dilatory walk
Tired, and uneasy at the halts I made.
A hundred times when, in these wanderings,
I have been busy with the toil of verse,
Great pains and little progress, and at once
Some fair enchanting image in my mind
Rose up, full-form'd, like Venus from the sea
Have I sprung forth towards him, and let loose
My hand upon his back with stormy joy,
Caressing him again, and yet again.
And when, in the public roads at eventide
I saunter'd, like a river murmuring
And talking to itself, at such a season
It was his custom to jog on before;
But, duly, whensoever he had met
A passenger approaching, would he turn
To give me timely notice, and straitway,
Punctual to such admonishment, I hush'd
My voice, composed my gait, and shap'd myself
To give and take a greeting that might save
My name from piteous rumours, such as wait
On men suspected to be craz'd in brain.

Those walks, well worthy to be priz'd and lov'd,
Regretted! that word, too, was on my tongue,
But they were richly laden with all good,
And cannot be remember'd but with thanks
And gratitude, and perfect joy of heart,
Those walks did now, like a returning spring,
Come back on me again. When first I made

Once more the circuit of our little Lake
 If ever happiness hath lodg'd with man,
 That day consummate happiness was mine,
 Wide-spreading, steady, calm, contemplative.
 The sun was set, or setting, when I left
 Our cottage door, and evening soon brought on
 A sober hour, not winning or serene,
 For cold and raw the air was, and untun'd:
 But, as a face we love is sweetest then
 When sorrow damps it, or, whatever look
 It chance to wear is sweetest if the heart
 Have fulness in itself, even so with me
 It fared that evening. Gently did my soul
 Put off her veil, and, self-transmuted, stood
 Naked as in the presence of her God.
 As on I walked, a comfort seem'd to touch
 A heart that had not been disconsolate,
 Strength came where weakness was not known to be,
 At least not felt; and restoration came,
 Like an intruder, knocking at the door
 Of unacknowledg'd weariness. I took
 The balance in my hand and weigh'd myself.
 I saw but little, and thereat was pleas'd;
 Little did I remember, and even this
 Still pleas'd me more; but I had hopes of peace
 And swellings of the spirit, was rapt and soothed,
 Convers'd with promises, had glimmering views
 How Life pervades the undecaying mind,
 How the immortal Soul with God-like power
 Informs, creates, and thaws the deepest sleep
 That time can lay upon her; how on earth,
 Man, if he do but live within the light
 Of high endeavours, daily spreads abroad
 His being with a strength that cannot fail.
 Nor was there want of milder thoughts, of love,
 Of innocence, and holiday repose;
 And more than pastoral quiet, in the heart
 Of amplest projects; and a peaceful end
 At last, or glorious, by endurance won.
 Thus musing, in a wood I sate me down,
 Alone, continuing there to muse: meanwhile

THE PRELUDE

The mountain heights were slowly overspread
With darkness, and before a rippling breeze
The long Lake lengthen'd out its hoary line;
And in the shelter'd coppice where I sate,
Around me, from among the hazel leaves,
Now here, now there, stirr'd by the straggling wind,
Came intermittingly a breath-like sound,
A respiration short and quick, which oft,
Yea, might I say, again and yet again,
Mistaking for the panting of my Dog,
The off and on Companion of my walk,
I turn'd my head, to look if he were there.

A freshness also found I at this time
In human Life, the life I mean of those
Whose occupations really I lov'd.
The prospect often touch'd me with surprize,
Crowded and full, and chang'd, as seem'd to me,
Even as a garden in the heat of Spring,
After an eight-days' absence. For (to omit
The things which were the same and yet appear'd
So different) amid this solitude,
The little Vale where was my chief abode,
'Twas not indifferent to a youthful mind
To note, perhaps, some shelter'd Seat in which
An old Man had been used to sun himself,
Now empty; pale-fac'd Babes whom I had left
In arms, known children of the neighbourhood,
Now rosy prattlers, tottering up and down;
And growing Girls whose beauty, filch'd away
With all its pleasant promises, was gone
To deck some slighted Playmate's homely cheek.

Yes, I had something of another eye,
And often, looking round, was mov'd to smiles,
Such as a delicate work of humour breeds.
I read, without design, the opinions, thoughts
Of those plain-living People, in a sense
Of love and knowledge; with another eye
I saw the quiet Woodman in the Woods,
The Shepherd on the Hills. With new delight,

This chiefly, did I view my grey-hair'd Dame,
 Saw her go forth to Church, or other work
 Of state, equipp'd in monumental trim,
 Short Velvet Cloak (her Bonnet of the like)
 A Mantle such as Spanish Cavaliers
 Wore in old time. Her smooth domestic life,
 Affectionate without uneasiness,
 Her talk, her business pleas'd me, and no less
 Her clear though shallow stream of piety,
 That ran on Sabbath days a fresher course.
 With thoughts unfelt till now, I saw her read
 Her Bible on the Sunday afternoons;
 And lov'd the book, when she had dropp'd asleep,
 And made of it a pillow for her head.

Nor less do I remember to have felt
 Distinctly manifested at this time
 A dawning, even as of another sense,
 A human-heartedness about my love
 For objects hitherto the gladsome air
 Of my own private being, and no more;
 Which I had loved, even as a blessed Spirit
 Or Angel, if he were to dwell on earth,
 Might love, in individual happiness.
 But now there open'd on me other thoughts,
 Of change, congratulation, and regret,
 A new-born feeling. It spread far and wide;
 The trees, the mountains shared it, and the brooks;
 The stars of Heaven, now seen in their old haunts,
 White Sirius, glittering o'er the southern crags,
 Orion with his belt, and those fair Seven,
 Acquaintances of every little child,
 And Jupiter, my own beloved Star.
 Whatever shadings of mortality
 Had fallen upon these objects heretofore
 Were different in kind; not tender: strong,
 Deep, gloomy were they and severe; the scatterings
 Of Childhood; and, moreover, had given way,
 In later youth, to beauty, and to love
 Enthusiastic, to delight and joy.

THE PRELUDE

As one who hangs down-bending from the side
Of a slow-moving Boat, upon the breast
Of a still water, solacing himself
With such discoveries as his eye can make,
Beneath him, in the bottom of the deeps,
Sees many beauteous sights, weeds, fishes, flowers,
Grots, pebbles, roots of trees, and fancies more;
Yet often is perplex'd, and cannot part
The shadow from the substance, rocks and sky,
Mountains and clouds, from that which is indeed
The region, and the things which there abide
In their true dwelling; now is cross'd by gleam
Of his own image, by a sunbeam now,
And motions that are sent he knows not whence,
Impediments that make his task more sweet;
—Such pleasant office have we long pursued
Incumbent o'er the surface of past time
With like success; nor have we often look'd
On more alluring shows (to me, at least,)
More soft, or less ambiguously descried,
Than those which now we have been passing by,
And where we still are lingering. Yet, in spite
Of all these new employments of the mind,
There was an inner falling-off. I loved,
Loved deeply, all that I had loved before
More deeply even than ever; but a swarm
Of heady thoughts jostling each other, gawds,
And feast, and dance, and public revelry,
And sports and games (less pleasing in themselves,
Than as they were a badge glossy and fresh
Of manliness and freedom) these did now
Seduce me from the firm habitual quest
Of feeding pleasures, from that eager zeal,
Those yearnings which had every day been mine,
A wild, unworldly-minded Youth, given up
To Nature and to Books, or, at the most,
From time to time, by inclination shipp'd,
One among many, in societies,
That were, or seem'd, as simple as myself.
But now was come a change; it would demand
Some skill, and longer time than may be spared,

To paint, even to myself, these vanities,
 And how they wrought. But, sure it is that now
 Contagious air did oft environ me
 Unknown among these haunts in former days.
 The very garments that I wore appear'd
 To prey upon my strength, and stopp'd the course
 And quiet stream of self-forgetfulness.
 Something there was about me that perplex'd
 Th' authentic sight of reason, press'd too closely
 On that religious dignity of mind,
 That is the very faculty of truth;
 Which wanting, either, from the very first,
 A function never lighted up, or else
 Extinguish'd, Man, a creature great and good,
 Seems but a pageant plaything with vile claws
 And this great frame of breathing elements
 A senseless Idol.

That vague heartless chace
 Of trivial pleasures was a poor exchange
 For Books and Nature at that early age.
 'Tis true, some casual knowledge might be gain'd
 Of character or life; but at that time
 Of manners put to school I took small note;
 And all my deeper passions lay elsewhere.
 Far better had it been to exalt the mind
 By solitary study; to uphold
 Intense desire by thought and quietness.
 And yet, in chastisement of these regrets,
 The memory of one particular hour
 Doth here rise up against me. In a throng,
 A festal company of Maids and Youths,
 Old Men, and Matrons staid, promiscuous rout,
 A medley of all tempers, I had pass'd
 The night in dancing, gaiety and mirth;
 With din of instruments, and shuffling feet,
 And glancing forms, and tapers glittering,
 And unaim'd prattle flying up and down,
 Spirits upon the stretch, and here and there
 Slight shocks of young love-like interspers'd,
 That mounted up like joy into the head,
 And tingled through the veins. Ere we retired,

THE PRELUDE

The cock had crow'd, the sky was bright with day.
Two miles I had to walk along the fields
Before I reached my home. Magnificent
The morning was, in memorable pomp,
More glorious than I ever had beheld.
The Sea was laughing at a distance; all
The solid Mountains were as bright as clouds,
Grain-tinctured, drench'd in empyrean light;
And, in the meadows and the lower grounds,
Was all the sweetness of a common dawn,
Dews, vapours, and the melody of birds,
And Labourers going forth into the fields.
—Ah! need I say, dear Friend, that to the brim
My heart was full; I made no vows, but vows
Were then made for me; bond unknown to me
Was given, that I should be, else sinning greatly,
A dedicated Spirit. On I walk'd
In blessedness, which even yet remains.

Strange rendezvous my mind was at that time,
A party-colour'd show of grave and gay,
Solid and light, short-sighted and profound,
Of inconsiderate habits and sedate,
Consorting in one mansion unprov'd.
I knew the worth of that which I possess'd,
Though slighted and misus'd. Besides, in truth,
That Summer, swarming as it did with thoughts
Transient and loose, yet wanted not a store
Of primitive hours, when, by these hindrances
Unthwarted, I experienc'd in myself
Conformity as just as that of old
To the end and written spirit of God's works,
Whether held forth in Nature or in Man.

From many wanderings that have left behind
Remembrances not lifeless, I will here
Single out one, then pass to other themes.

A favourite pleasure hath it been with me,
From time of earliest youth, to walk alone
Along the public Way, when, for the night

Deserted, in its silence it assumes
 A character of deeper quietness
 Than pathless solitudes. At such an hour
 Once, ere these summer months were pass'd away,
 I slowly mounted up a steep ascent
 Where the road's watery surface, to the ridge
 Of that sharp rising, glitter'd in the moon,
 And seem'd before my eyes another stream
 Creeping with silent lapse to join the brook
 That murmur'd in the valley. On I went
 Tranquil, receiving in my own despite
 Amusement, as I slowly pass'd along,
 From such near objects as from time to time
 Perforce, intruded on the listless sense
 Quiescent, and dispos'd to sympathy,
 With an exhausted mind, worn out by toil,
 And all unworthy of the deeper joy
 Which waits on distant prospect, cliff, or sea,
 The dark blue vault, and universe of stars.
 Thus did I steal along that silent road,
 My body from the stillness drinking in
 A restoration like the calm of sleep,
 But sweeter far. Above, before, behind,
 Around me, all was peace and solitude,
 I look'd not round, nor did the solitude
 Speak to my eye; but it was heard and felt.
 O happy state! what beauteous pictures now
 Rose in harmonious imagery—they rose
 As from some distant region of my soul
 And came along like dreams; yet such as left
 Obscurely mingled with their passing forms
 A consciousness of animal delight,
 A self-possession felt in every pause
 And every gentle movement of my frame.

While thus I wander'd, step by step led on,
 It chanc'd a sudden turning of the road
 Presented to my view an uncouth shape
 So near, that, slipping back into the shade
 Of a thick hawthorn, I could mark him well,
 Myself unseen. He was of stature tall,
 A foot above man's common measure tall,

THE PRELUDE

Stiff in his form, and upright, lank and lean;
A man more meagre, as it seem'd to me,
Was never seen abroad by night or day.
His arms were long, and bare his hands; his mouth
Shew'd ghastly in the moonlight: from behind
A milestone propp'd him, and his figure seem'd
Half-sitting, and half-standing. I could mark
That he was clad in military garb,
Though faded, yet entire. He was alone,
Had no attendant, neither Dog, nor Staff,
Nor knapsack; in his very dress appear'd
A desolation, a simplicity
That seem'd akin to solitude. Long time
Did I peruse him with a mingled sense
Of fear and sorrow. From his lips, meanwhile,
There issued murmuring sounds, as if of pain
Or of uneasy thought; yet still his form
Kept the same steadiness; and at his feet
His shadow lay, and mov'd not. In a Glen
Hard by, a Village stood, whose roofs and doors
Were visible among the scatter'd trees,
Scarce distant from the spot an arrow's flight;
I wish'd to see him move; but he remain'd
Fix'd to his place, and still from time to time
Sent forth a murmuring voice of dead complaint,
Groans scarcely audible. Without self-blame
I had not thus prolong'd my watch; and now,
Subduing my heart's specious cowardise
I left the shady nook where I had stood,
And hail'd him. Slowly from his resting-place
He rose, and with a lean and wasted arm
In measur'd gesture lifted to his head,
Return'd my salutation; then resum'd
His station as before: and when, erelong,
I ask'd his history, he in reply
Was neither slow nor eager; but unmov'd,
And with a quiet, uncomplaining voice,
A stately air of mild indifference,
He told, in simple words, a Soldier's tale,
That in the Tropic Islands he had serv'd,
Whence he had landed, scarcely ten days past,

That on his landing he had been dismiss'd,
 And now was travelling to his native home.
 At this, I turn'd and looked towards the Village
 But all were gone to rest; the fires all out;
 And every silent window to the Moon
 Shone with a yellow glitter. "No one there,"
 Said I, "is waking, we must measure back
 The way which we have come: behind yon wood
 A Labourer dwells; and, take it on my word
 He will not murmur should we break his rest;
 And with a ready heart will give you food
 And lodging for the night." At this he stoop'd,
 And from the ground took up an oaken Staff,
 By me yet unobserved, a traveller's Staff;
 Which, I suppose, from his slack hand had dropp'd,
 And lain till now neglected in the grass.

Towards the Cottage without more delay
 We shap'd our course; as it appear'd to me,
 He travell'd without pain, and I beheld
 With ill-suppress'd astonishment his tall
 And ghastly figure moving at my side;
 Nor, while we journey'd thus could I forbear
 To question him of what he had endur'd
 From hardship, battle, or the pestilence.
 He, all the while, was in demeanour calm,
 Concise in answer; solemn and sublime
 He might have seem'd, but that in all he said
 There was a strange half-absence, and a tone
 Of weakness and indifference, as of one
 Remembering the importance of his theme
 But feeling it no longer. We advanced
 Slowly, and, ere we to the wood were come
 Discourse had ceas'd. Together on we pass'd,
 In silence, through the shades, gloomy and dark;
 Then, turning up along an open field
 We gain'd the Cottage. At the door I knock'd,
 Calling aloud "my Friend, here is a Man
 By sickness overcome; beneath your roof
 This night let him find rest, and give him food,
 If food he need, for he is faint and tired."

THE PRELUDE

Assur'd that now my Comrade would repose
In comfort, I entreated that henceforth
He would not linger in the public ways
But ask for timely furtherance and help
Such as his state requir'd. At this reproof,
With the same ghastly mildness in his look
He said "my trust is in the God of Heaven
And in the eye of him that passes me."
The Cottage door was speedily unlock'd,
And now the Soldier touch'd his hat again
With his lean hand; and in a voice that seem'd
To speak with a reviving interest,
Till then unfelt, he thank'd me; I return'd
The blessing of the poor unhappy Man;
And so we parted. Back I cast a look,
And linger'd near the door a little space;
Then sought with quiet heart my distant home.

BOOK FIFTH

Books

EVEN in the steadiest mood of reason, when
All sorrow for thy transitory pains
Goes out, it grieves me for thy state, O Man,
Thou paramount Creature! and thy race, while ye
Shall sojourn on this planet; not for woes
Which thou endur'st; that weight, albeit huge,
I charm away; but for those palms atchiev'd
Through length of time, by study and hard thought,
The honours of thy high endowments, there
My sadness finds its fuel. Hitherto,
In progress through this Verse, my mind hath look'd
Upon the speaking face of earth and heaven
As her prime Teacher, intercourse with man
Establish'd by the sovereign Intellect,
Who through that bodily Image hath diffus'd
A soul divine which we participate,
A deathless spirit. Thou also, Man, hast wrought,
For commerce of thy nature with itself,

Things worthy of unconquerable life;
 And yet we feel, we cannot chuse but feel
 That these must perish. Tremblings of the heart
 It gives, to think that the immortal being
 No more shall need such garments; and yet Man,
 As long as he shall be the Child of Earth,
 Might almost "weep to have" what he may lose,
 Nor be himself extinguish'd; but survive
 Abject, depress'd, forlorn, disconsolate.
 A thought is with me sometimes, and I say,
 Should earth by inward throes be wrench'd throughout,
 Or fire be sent from far to wither all
 Her pleasant habitations, and dry up
 Old Ocean in his bed left sing'd and bare,
 Yet would the living Presence still subsist
 Victorious; and composure would ensue,
 And kindlings like the morning; presage sure,
 Though slow, perhaps, of a returning day.
 But all the meditations of mankind,
 Yea, all the adamantine holds of truth,
 By reason built, or passion, which itself
 Is highest reason in a soul sublime;
 The consecrated works of Bard and Sage,
 Sensuous or intellectual, wrought by men,
 Twin labourers and heirs of the same hopes,
 Where would they be? Oh! why hath not the mind
 Some element to stamp her image on
 In nature somewhat nearer to her own?
 Why, gifted with such powers to send abroad
 Her spirit, must it lodge in shrines so frail?

One day, when in the hearing of a Friend,
 I had given utterance to thoughts like these,
 He answer'd with a smile that, in plain truth
 'Twas going far to seek disquietude;
 But on the front of his reproof, confess'd
 That he, at sundry seasons, had himself
 Yielded to kindred hauntings. And forthwith
 Added, that once upon a time a summer's noon,
 While he was sitting in a rocky cave
 By the sea-side, perusing, as it chanced,

The famous History of the Errant Knight
 Recorded by Cervantes, these same thoughts
 Came to him; and to height unusual rose
 While listlessly he sate, and having closed
 The Book, had turned his eyes towards the Sea.
 On Poetry and geometric Truth,
 The knowledge that endures, upon these two,
 And their high privilege of lasting life,
 Exempt from all internal injury,
 He mused; upon these chiefly: and at length,
 His senses yielding to the sultry air,
 Sleep seiz'd him, and he pass'd into a dream.
 He saw before him an Arabian Waste,
 A Desart; and he fancied that himself
 Was sitting there in the wide wilderness,
 Alone, upon the sands. Distress of mind
 Was growing in him when, behold! at once
 To his great joy a Man was at his side,
 Upon a dromedary, mounted high.
 He seem'd an Arab of the Bedouin Tribes,
 A Lance he bore, and underneath one arm
 A Stone; and, in the opposite hand, a Shell
 Of a surpassing brightness. Much rejoic'd
 The dreaming Man that he should have a Guide
 To lead him through the Desart; and he thought,
 While questioning himself what this strange freight
 Which the Newcomer carried through the Waste
 Could mean, the Arab told him that the Stone,
 To give it in the language of the Dream,
 Was Euclid's Elements; "and this," said he,
 "This other," pointing to the Shell, "this Book
 Is something of more worth." And, at the word,
 The Stranger, said my Friend continuing,
 Stretch'd forth the Shell towards me, with command
 That I should hold it to my ear; I did so,
 And heard that instant in an unknown Tongue,
 Which yet I understand, articulate sounds,
 A loud prophetic blast of harmony,
 An Ode, in passion utter'd, which foretold
 Destruction to the Children of the Earth,
 By deluge now at hand. No sooner ceas'd

The Song, but with calm look, the Arab said
 That all was true; that it was even so
 As he had spoken; and that he himself
 Was going then to bury those two Books:
 The one that held acquaintance with the stars,
 And wedded man to man by purest bond
 Of nature, undisturbed by space or time;
 Th' other that was a God, yea many Gods,
 Had voices more than all the winds, and was
 A joy, a consolation, and a hope.
 My friend continued, "strange as it may seem,
 I wonder'd not, although I plainly saw
 The one to be a Stone, th' other a Shell,
 Nor doubted once but that they both were Books,
 Having a perfect faith in all that pass'd.
 A wish was now ingender'd in my fear
 To cleave unto this Man, and I begg'd leave
 To share his errand with him. On he pass'd
 Not heeding me; I follow'd, and took note
 That he look'd often backward with wild look,
 Grasping his twofold treasure to his side.
 —Upon a Dromedary, Lance in rest,
 He rode, I keeping pace with him, and now
 I fancied that he was the very Knight
 Whose Tale Cervantes tells, yet not the Knight,
 But was an Arab of the Desart, too;
 Of these was neither, and was both at once.
 His countenance, meanwhile, grew more disturb'd,
 And, looking backwards when he look'd, I saw
 A glittering light, and ask'd him whence it came.
 "It is," said he, "the waters of the deep
 Gathering upon us," quickening then his pace
 He left me: I call'd after him aloud;
 He heeded not; but with his twofold charge
 Beneath his arm, before me full in view
 I saw him riding o'er the Desart Sands,
 With the fleet waters of the drowning world
 In chase of him, whereat I wak'd in terror,
 And saw the Sea before me; and the Book,
 In which I had been reading, at my side.

Full often, taking from the world of sleep
 This Arab Phantom, which my Friend beheld,
 This Semi-Quixote, I to him have given
 A substance, fancied him a living man,
 A gentle Dweller in the Desert, craz'd
 By love and feeling and internal thought,
 Protracted among endless solitudes;
 Have shap'd him, in the oppression of his brain,
 Wandering upon his quest, and thus equipp'd.
 And I have scarcely pitied him; have felt
 A reverence for a Being thus employ'd;
 And thought that in the blind and awful lair
 Of such a madness, reason did lie couch'd.
 Enow there are on earth to take in charge
 Their Wives, their Children, and their virgin Loves,
 Or whatsoever else the heart holds dear;
 Enow to think of these; yea, will I say,
 In sober contemplation of the approach
 Of such great overthrow, made manifest
 By certain evidence, that I, methinks,
 Could share that Maniac's anxiousness, could go
 Upon like errand. Oftentimes, at least,
 Me hath such deep entrancement half-possess'd,
 When I have held a volume in my hand
 Poor earthly casket of immortal Verse!
 Shakespeare, or Milton, Labourers divine!

Mighty indeed, supreme must be the power
 Of living Nature, which could thus so long
 Detain me from the best of other thoughts.
 Even in the lisping time of Infancy,
 And later down, in prattling Childhood, even
 While I was travelling back among those days,
 How could I ever play an ingrate's part?
 Once more should I have made those bowers resound,
 And intermingled strains of thankfulness
 With their own thoughtless melodies; at least,
 It might have well beseem'd me to repeat
 Some simply fashion'd tale; to tell again,
 In slender accents of sweet Verse, some tale
 That did bewitch me then, and soothes me now.

O Friend! O Poet! Brother of my soul,
 Think not that I could ever pass along
 Untouch'd by these remembrances; no, no,
 But I was hurried forward by a stream,
 And could not stop. Yet wherefore should I speak,
 Why call upon a few weak words to say
 What is already written in the hearts
 Of all that breathe? what in the path of all
 Drops daily from the tongue of every child,
 Wherever Man is found. The trickling tear
 Upon the cheek of listening Infancy
 Tells it, and the insuperable look
 That drinks as if it never could be full.

That portion of my story I shall leave
 There register'd: whatever else there be
 Of power or pleasure, sown or fostered thus,
 Peculiar to myself, let that remain
 Where it lies hidden in its endless home
 Among the depths of time. And yet it seems
 That here, in memory of all books which lay
 Their sure foundations in the heart of Man;
 Whether by native prose or numerous verse,
 That in the name of all inspirèd Souls,
 From Homer, the great Thunderer; from the voice
 Which roars along the bed of Jewish Song;
 And that, more varied and elaborate,
 Those trumpet-tones of harmony that shake
 Our Shores in England; from those loftiest notes
 Down to the low and wren-like warblings, made
 For Cottagers and Spinners at the wheel,
 And weary Travellers when they rest themselves
 By the highways and hedges; ballad tunes,
 Food for the hungry ears of little Ones,
 And of old Men who have surviv'd their joy;
 It seemeth, in behalf of these, the works
 And of the Men who fram'd them, whether known,
 Or sleeping nameless in their scatter'd graves,
 That I should here assert their rights, attest
 Their honours; and should, once for all, pronounce
 Their benediction; speak of them as Powers

For ever to be hallowed; only less,
 For what we may become, and what we need,
 Than Nature's self, which is the breath of God.

Rarely, and with reluctance, would I stoop
 To transitory themes; yet I rejoice,
 And, by these thoughts admonish'd, must speak out
 Thanksgivings from my heart, that I was rear'd
 Safe from an evil which these days have laid
 Upon the Children of the Land, a pest
 That might have dried me up, body and soul.
 This Verse is dedicate to Nature's self,
 And things that teach as Nature teaches, then
 Oh where had been the Man, the Poet where?
 Where had we been, we two, beloved Friend,
 If we, in lieu of wandering, as we did,
 Through heights and hollows, and bye-spots of tales
 Rich with indigenous produce, open ground
 Of Fancy, happy pastures rang'd at will!
 Had been attended, follow'd, watch'd, and noos'd,
 Each in his several melancholy walk
 String'd like a poor man's Heifer, at its feed
 Led through the lanes in forlorn servitude;
 Or rather like a stallèd ox shut out
 From touch of growing grass; that may not taste
 A flower till it have yielded up its sweets
 A prelibation to the mower's scythe.

Behold the Parent Hen amid her Brood,
 Though fledged and feather'd, and well pleased to part
 And straggle from her presence, still a Brood,
 And she herself from the maternal bond
 Still undischarged; yet doth she little more
 Than move with them in tenderness and love,
 A centre of the circle which they make;
 And, now and then, alike from need of theirs,
 And call of her own natural appetites,
 She scratches, ransacks up the earth for food
 Which they partake at pleasure. Early died
 My honour'd Mother; she who was the heart
 And hinge of all our learnings and our loves:

She left us destitute, and as we might
 Trooping together. Little suits it me
 To break upon the sabbath of her rest
 With any thought that looks at others' blame,
 Nor would I praise her but in perfect love.
 Hence am I check'd: but I will boldly say,
 In gratitude, and for the sake of truth,
 Unheard by her, that she, not falsely taught,
 Fetching her goodness rather from times past
 Than shaping novelties from those to come,
 Had no presumption, no such jealousy;
 Nor did by habit of her thoughts mistrust
 Our Nature; but had virtual faith that he,
 Who fills the Mother's breasts with innocent milk,
 Doth also for our nobler part provide,
 Under his great correction and controul,
 As innocent instincts, and as innocent food.
 This was her creed, and therefore she was pure
 From feverish dread of error or mishap
 And evil, overweeningly so call'd;
 Was not puff'd up by false unnatural hopes;
 Nor selfish with unnecessary cares;
 Nor with impatience from the season ask'd
 More than its timely produce; rather lov'd
 The hours for what they are than from regards
 Glanced on their promises in restless pride.
 Such was she; not from faculties more strong
 Than others have, but from the times, perhaps,
 And spot in which she liv'd, and through a grace
 Of modest meekness, simple-mindedness,
 A heart that found benignity and hope,
 Being itself benign.

My drift hath scarcely,
 I fear, been obvious; for I have recoil'd
 From showing as it is the monster birth
 Engender'd by these too industrious times.
 Let few words paint it: 'tis a Child, no Child,
 But a dwarf Man; in knowledge, virtue, skill;
 In what he is not, and in what he is,
 The noontide shadow of a man complete;
 A worshipper of worldly seemliness,

Not quarrelsome; for that were far beneath
 His dignity; with gifts he bubbles o'er
 As generous as a fountain; selfishness
 May not come near him, gluttony or pride;
 The wandering Beggars propagate his name,
 Dumb creatures find him tender as a Nun.
 Yet deem him not for this a naked dish
 Of goodness merely, he is garnish'd out.
 Arch are his notices, and nice his sense
 Of the ridiculous; deceit and guile
 Meanness and falsehood he detests, can treat
 With apt and graceful laughter; nor is blind
 To the broad follies of the licens'd world;
 Though shrewd, yet innocent himself withal
 And can read lectures upon innocence.
 He is fenc'd round, nay arm'd, for aught we know
 In panoply complete; and fear itself,
 Natural or supernatural alike,
 Unless it leap upon him in a dream,
 Touches him not. Briefly, the moral part
 Is perfect, and in learning and in books
 He is a prodigy. His discourse moves slow,
 Massy and ponderous as a prison door,
 Tremendously emboss'd with terms of art;
 Rank growth of propositions overruns
 The Stripling's brain; the path in which he treads
 Is chok'd with grammars; cushion of Divine
 Was never such a type of thought profound
 As is the pillow where he rests his head.
 The Ensigns of the Empire which he holds,
 The globe and sceptre of his royalties
 Are telescopes, and crucibles, and maps.
 Ships he can guide across the pathless sea,
 And tell you all their cunning; he can read
 The inside of the earth, and spell the stars;
 He knows the policies of foreign Lands;
 Can string you names of districts, cities, towns,
 The whole world over, tight as beads of dew
 Upon a gossamer thread; he sifts, he weighs;
 Takes nothing upon trust. His Teachers stare
 The Country People pray for God's good grace,

And tremble at his deep experiments.
 All things are put to question; he must live
 Knowing that he grows wiser every day,
 Or else not live at all; and seeing, too,
 Each little drop of wisdom as it falls
 Into the dimpling cistern of his heart;
 Meanwhile old Grandame Earth is grieved to find
 The playthings, which her love design'd for him,
 Unthought of: in their woodland beds the flowers
 Weep, and the river sides are all forlorn.

Now this is hollow, 'tis a life of lies
 From the beginning, and in lies must end.
 Forth bring him to the air of common sense,
 And, fresh and shewy as it is, the Corpse
 Slips from us into powder. Vanity
 That is his soul, there lives he, and there moves;
 It is the soul of every thing he seeks;
 That gone, nothing is left which he can love.
 Nay, if a thought of purer birth should rise
 To carry him towards a better clime
 Some busy helper still is on the watch
 To drive him back and pound him like a Stray
 Within the pinfold of his own conceit;
 Which is his home, his natural dwelling place.
 Oh! give us once again the Wishing-Cap
 Of Fortunatus, and the invisible Coat
 Of Jack the Giant-killer, Robin Hood,
 And Sabra in the forest with St. George!
 The child, whose love is here, at least, doth reap
 One precious gain, that he forgets himself.

These mighty workmen of our later age
 Who with a broad highway have overbridged
 The froward chaos of futurity,
 Tam'd to their bidding; they who have the skill
 To manage books, and things, and make them work
 Gently on infant minds, as does the sun
 Upon a flower; the Tutors of our Youth
 The Guides, the Wardens of our faculties,
 And Stewards of our labour, watchful men

And skilful in the usury of time,
Sages, who in their prescience would controul
All accidents, and to the very road
Which they have fashion'd would confine us down,
Like engines, when will they be taught
That in the unreasoning progress of the world
A wiser Spirit is at work for us,
A better eye than theirs, more prodigal
Of blessings, and more studious of our good,
Even in what seem our most unfruitful hours?

There was a Boy, ye knew him well, ye Cliffs
And Islands of Winander! many a time
At evening, when the stars had just begun
To move along the edges of the hills,
Rising or setting, would he stand alone
Beneath the trees, or by the glimmering Lake,
And there, with fingers interwoven, both hands
Press'd closely, palm to palm, and to his mouth
Uplifted, he, as through an instrument,
Blew mimic hootings to the silent owls
That they might answer him.—And they would shout
Across the watery Vale, and shout again,
Responsive to his call, with quivering peals,
And long halloos, and screams, and echoes loud
Redoubled and redoubled; concourse wild
Of mirth and jocund din! And when it chanced
That pauses of deep silence mock'd his skill,
Then sometimes, in that silence, while he hung
Listening, a gentle shock of mild surprize
Has carried far into his heart the voice
Of mountain torrents; or the visible scene
Would enter unawares into his mind
With all its solemn imagery, its rocks,
Its woods, and that uncertain Heaven, receiv'd
Into the bosom of the steady Lake.

This Boy was taken from his Mates, and died
In childhood, ere he was full ten years old.
—Fair are the woods, and beauteous is the spot,
The Vale where he was born; the Churchyard hangs

Upon a Slope above the Village School,
 And there, along the bank, when I have pass'd
 At evening, I believe that oftentimes
 A full half-hour together I have stood
 Mute—looking at the Grave in which he lies.

Even now before my sight, methinks, I have
 That self-same Village Church; I see her sit,
 The thronèd Lady spoken of erewhile,
 On her green hill; forgetful of this Boy
 Who slumbers at her feet; forgetful, too,
 Of all her silent neighbourhood of graves,
 And listening only to the gladsome sounds
 That, from the rural School ascending, play
 Beneath her and about her. May she long
 Behold a race of young Ones like to those.
 With whom I herded! (easily, indeed,
 We might have fed upon a fatter soil
 Of Arts and Letters, but be that forgiven)
 A race of real children, not too wise,
 Too learned, or too good; but wanton, fresh,
 And bandied up and down by love and hate,
 Fierce, moody, patient, venturous, modest, shy;
 Mad at their sports like wither'd leaves in winds;
 Though doing wrong, and suffering, and full oft
 Bending beneath our life's mysterious weight
 Of pain and fear; yet still in happiness
 Not yielding to the happiest upon earth.
 Simplicity in habit, truth in speech,
 Be these the daily strengtheners of their minds!
 May books and nature be their early joy!
 And knowledge, rightly honor'd with that name,
 Knowledge not purchas'd with the loss of power!

Well do I call to mind the very week
 When I was first entrusted to the care
 Of that sweet Valley; when its paths, its shores,
 And brooks, were like a dream of novelty
 To my half-infant thoughts; that very week
 While I was roving up and down alone,
 Seeking I knew not what, I chanced to cross

THE PRELUDE

One of those open fields, which, shaped like ears,
Make green peninsulas on Esthwaite's Lake:
Twilight was coming on; yet through the gloom,
I saw distinctly on the opposite Shore
A heap of garments, left, as I suppos'd,
By one who there was bathing; long I watch'd,
But no one own'd them; meanwhile the calm Lake
Grew dark, with all the shadows on its breast,
And, now and then, a fish up-leaping, snapp'd
The breathless stillness. The succeeding day,
(Those unclaimed garments telling a plain Tale)
Went there a Company, and, in their Boat
Sounded with grappling irons, and long poles.
At length, the dead Man, 'mid that beauteous scene
Of trees, and hills and water, bolt upright
Rose with his ghastly face; a spectre shape
Of terror even! and yet no vulgar fear,
Young as I was, a Child not nine years old,
Possess'd me; for my inner eye had seen
Such sights before, among the shining streams
Of Fairy land, the Forests of Romance:
Hence came a spirit hallowing what I saw
With decoration and ideal grace;
A dignity, a smoothness, like the works
Of Grecian Art, and purest Poesy.

I had a precious treasure at that time
A little, yellow canvas-cover'd Book,
A slender abstract of the Arabian Tales;
And when I learn'd, as now I first did learn,
From my Companions in this new abode,
That this dear prize of mine was but a block
Hewn from a mighty quarry; in a word,
That there were four large Volumes, laden all
With kindred matter, 'twas, in truth, to me
A promise scarcely earthly. Instantly
I made a league, a covenant with a Friend
Of my own age, that we should lay aside
The monies we possess'd, and hoard up more,
Till our joint savings had amass'd enough
To make this Book our own. Through several months

Religiously did we preserve that vow,
 And spite of all temptation, hoarded up
 And hoarded up; but firmness fail'd at length
 Nor were we ever masters of our wish.

And afterwards, when to my Father's House
 Returning at the holidays, I found
 That golden store of books which I had left
 Open to my enjoyment once again
 What heart was mine! Full often through the course
 Of those glad respites in the summer-time
 When, arm'd with rod and line we went abroad
 For a whole day together, I have lain
 Down by thy side, O Derwent! murmuring Stream,
 On the hot stones and in the glaring sun,
 And there have read, devouring as I read,
 Defrauding the day's glory, desperate!
 Till, with a sudden bound of smart reproach,
 Such as an Idler deals with in his shame,
 I to the sport betook myself again.

A gracious Spirit o'er this earth presides,
 And o'er the heart of man: invisibly
 It comes, directing those to works of love
 Who care not, know not, think not what they do:
 The Tales that charm away the wakeful night
 In Araby, Romances, Legends, penn'd
 For solace, by the light of monkish Lamps;
 Fictions for Ladies, of their Love, devis'd
 By youthful Squires; adventures endless, spun
 By the dismantled Warrior in old age,
 Out of the bowels of those very thoughts
 In which his youth did first extravagate,
 These spread like day, and something in the shape
 Of these, will live till man shall be no more.
 Dumb yearnings, hidden appetites are ours,
 And they must have their food: our childhood sits,
 Our simple childhood sits upon a throne
 That hath more power than all the elements.
 I guess not what this tells of Being past,
 Nor what it augurs of the life to come;

THE PRELUDE

But so it is; and in that dubious hour,
That twilight when we first begin to see
This dawning earth, to recognise, expect;
And in the long probation that ensues,
The time of trial, ere we learn to live
In reconcilment with our stinted powers,
To endure this state of meagre vassalage;
Unwilling to forego, confess, submit,
Uneasy and unsettled, yoke-fellows
To custom, mettlesome, and not yet tam'd
And humbled down, oh! then we feel, we feel,
We know when we have Friends. Ye dreamers, then,
Forgers of lawless tales! we bless you then,
Impostors, drivellers, dotards, as the ape
Philosophy will call you: then we feel
With what, and how great might ye are in league,
Who make our wish our power, our thought a deed,
An empire, a possession; Ye whom Time
And Seasons serve; all Faculties; to whom
Earth crouches, th' elements are potter's clay,
Space like a Heaven fill'd up with Northern lights;
Here, nowhere, there, and everywhere at once.

It might demand a more ambitious strain
To tell of later pleasures, link'd to these,
A tract of the same isthmus which we cross
In progress from our native continent
To earth and human life; I mean to speak
Of that delightful time of growing youth
When cravings for the marvellous relent,
And we begin to love what we have seen;
And sober truth, experience, sympathy,
Take stronger hold of us; and words themselves
Move us with conscious pleasure.

I am sad
At thought of raptures, now for ever flown,
Even unto tears, I sometimes could be sad
To think of, to read over, many a page,
Poems withal of name, which at that time
Did never fail to entrance me, and are now
Dead in my eyes as is a theatre

Fresh emptied of spectators. Thirteen years
 Or haply less, I might have seen, when first
 My ears began to open to the charm
 Of words in tuneful order, found them sweet
 For *their own* sakes, a passion and a power;
 And phrases pleas'd me, chosen for delight,
 For pomp, or love. Oft in the public roads,
 Yet unfrequented, while the morning light
 Was yellowing the hill-tops, with that dear Friend
 The same whom I have mention'd heretofore,
 I went abroad, and for the better part
 Of two delightful hours we stroll'd along
 By the still borders of the misty Lake,
 Repeating favourite verses with one voice,
 Or conning more; as happy as the birds
 That round us chaunted. Well might we be glad,
 Lifted above the ground by airy fancies
 More bright than madness or the dreams of wine,
 And, though full oft the objects of our love
 Were false, and in their splendour overwrought,
 Yet, surely, at such time no vulgar power
 Was working in us, nothing less, in truth,
 Than that most noble attribute of man,
 Though yet untutor'd and inordinate,
 That wish for something loftier, more adorn'd,
 Than is the common aspect, daily garb
 Of human life. What wonder then if sounds
 Of exultation echoed through the groves!
 For images, and sentiments, and words,
 And everything with which we had to do
 In that delicious world of poesy,
 Kept holiday; a never-ending show,
 With music, incense, festival, and flowers!

Here must I pause: this only will I add,
 From heart-experience, and in humblest sense
 Of modesty, that he, who, in his youth
 A wanderer among the woods and fields,
 With living Nature hath been intimate,
 Not only in that raw unpractis'd time
 Is stirr'd to ecstasy, as others are,

THE PRELUDE

By glittering verse; but, he doth furthermore,
In measure only dealt out to himself,
Receive enduring touches of deep joy
From the great Nature that exists in works
Of mighty Poets. Visionary Power
Attends upon the motions of the winds
Embodied in the mystery of words.
There darkness makes abode, and all the host
Of shadowy things do work their changes there,
As in a mansion like their proper home;
Even forms and substances are circumfused
By that transparent veil with light divine;
And through the turnings intricate of Verse,
Present themselves as objects recognis'd,
In flashes, and with a glory scarce their own.

Thus far a scanty record is deduced
Of what I owed to Books in early life;
Their later influence yet remains untold;
But as this work was taking in my thoughts
Proportions that seem'd larger than had first
Been meditated, I was indisposed
To any further progress at a time
When these acknowledgements were left unpaid.

BOOK SIXTH

Cambridge and the Alps

THE leaves were yellow when to Furness Fells,
The haunt of Shepherds, and to cottage life
I bade adieu; and, one among the Flock
Who by that season are conven'd, like birds
Trooping together at the Fowler's lure,
Went back to Granta's cloisters; not so fond,
Or eager, though as gay and undepress'd
In spirit, as when I thence had taken flight
A few short months before. I turn'd my face
Without repining from the mountain pomp
Of Autumn, and its beauty enter'd in

With calmer Lakes, and louder Streams; and You,
 Frank-hearted Maids of rocky Cumberland,
 You and your not unwelcome days of mirth
 I quitted, and your nights of revelry,
 And in my own unlovely Cell sate down
 In lightsome mood; such privilege has Youth,
 That cannot take long leave of pleasant thoughts.

We need not linger o'er the ensuing time,
 But let me add at once that, now the bonds
 Of indolent and vague society
 Relaxing in their hold, I liv'd henceforth
 More to myself, read more, reflected more,
 Felt more, and settled daily into habits
 More promising. Two winters may be pass'd
 Without a separate notice; many books
 Were read in process of this time, devour'd,
 Tasted or skimm'd, or studiously perus'd,
 But with no settled plan. I was detached
 Internally from academic cares,
 From every hope of prowess and reward,
 And wish'd to be a lodger in that house
 Of Letters, and no more: and should have been
 Even such, but for some personal concerns
 That hung about me in my own despite
 Perpetually, no heavy weight, but still
 A baffling and a hindrance, a controul
 Which made the thought of planning for myself
 A course of independent study seem
 An act of disobedience towards them
 Who lov'd me, proud rebellion and unkind.
 This bastard virtue, rather let it have
 A name it more deserves, this cowardice,
 Gave treacherous sanction to that overlove
 Of freedom planted in me from the very first
 And indolence, by force of which I turn'd
 From regulations even of my own,
 As from restraints and bonds. And who can tell,
 Who knows what thus may have been gain'd both then
 And at a later season, or preserv'd;
 What love of nature, what original strength

THE PRELUDE

Of contemplation, what intuitive truths
The deepest and the best, and what research
Unbiass'd, unbewilder'd, and unaw'd?

The Poet's soul was with me at that time,
Sweet meditations, the still overflow
Of happiness and truth. A thousand hopes
Were mine, a thousand tender dreams, of which
No few have since been realiz'd, and some
Do yet remain, hopes for my future life.
Four years and thirty, told this very week,
Have I been now a sojourner on earth,
And yet the morning gladness is not gone
Which then was in my mind. Those were the days
Which also first encourag'd me to trust
With firmness, hitherto but lightly touch'd
With such a daring thought, that I might leave
Some monument behind me which pure hearts
Should reverence. The instinctive humbleness,
Upheld even by the very name and thought
Of printed books and authorship, began
To melt away, and further, the dread awe
Of mighty names was soften'd down, and seem'd
Approachable, admitting fellowship
Of modest sympathy. Such aspect now,
Though not familiarly, my mind put on;
I lov'd, and I enjoy'd, that was my chief
And ruling business, happy in the strength
And loveliness of imagery and thought.
All winter long, whenever free to take
My choice, did I at night frequent our Groves
And tributary walks, the last, and oft
The only one, who had been lingering there
Through hours of silence, till the Porter's Bell,
A punctual follower on the stroke of nine,
Rang with its blunt unceremonious voice,
Inexorable summons. Lofty Elms,
Inviting shades of opportune recess,
Did give composure to a neighbourhood
Unpeaceful in itself. A single Tree
There was, no doubt yet standing there, an Ash

With sinuous trunk, boughs exquisitely wreath'd;
 Up from the ground and almost to the top
 The trunk and master branches everywhere
 Were green with ivy; and the lightsome twigs
 And outer spray profusely tipp'd with seeds
 That hung in yellow tassels and festoons,
 Moving or still, a Favourite trimm'd out
 By Winter for himself, as if in pride,
 And with outlandish grace. Oft have I stood
 Foot-bound, uplooking at this lovely Tree
 Beneath a frosty moon. The hemisphere
 Of magic fiction, verse of mine perhaps
 May never tread; but scarcely Spenser's self
 Could have more tranquil visions in his youth,
 More bright appearances could scarcely see
 Of human Forms with superhuman Powers,
 Than I beheld, standing on winter nights
 Alone, beneath this fairy work of earth.
 'Twould be a waste of labour to detail
 The rambling studies of a truant Youth,
 Which further may be easily divin'd,
 What, and what kind they were. My inner knowledge,
 (This barely will I note) was oft in depth
 And delicacy like another mind
 Sequester'd from my outward taste in books,
 And yet the books which then I lov'd the most
 Are dearest to me now; for, being vers'd
 In living Nature, I had there a guide
 Which open'd frequently my eyes, else shut,
 A standard which was usefully applied,
 Even when unconsciously, to other things
 Which less I understood. In general terms,
 I was a better judge of thoughts than words,
 Misled as to these latter, not alone
 By common inexperience of youth
 But by the trade in classic niceties,
 Delusion to young Scholars incident
 And old ones also, by that overpriz'd
 And dangerous craft of picking phrases out
 From languages that want the living voice
 To make of them a nature to the heart,

THE PRELUDE

To tell us what is passion, what is truth,
What reason, what simplicity and sense.

Yet must I not entirely overlook
The pleasure gather'd from the elements
Of geometric science. I had stepp'd
In these inquiries but a little way,
No farther than the threshold; with regret
Sincere I mention this; but there I found
Enough to exalt, to cheer me and compose.
With Indian awe and wonder, ignorance
Which even was cherish'd, did I meditate
Upon the alliance of those simple, pure
Proportions and relations with the frame
And Laws of Nature, how they would become
Herein a leader to the human mind,
And made endeavours frequent to detect
The process by dark guesses of my own.
Yet from this source more frequently I drew
A pleasure calm and deeper, a still sense
Of permanent and universal sway
And paramount endowment in the mind,
An image not unworthy of the one
Surpassing Life, which out of space and time,
Nor touched by welterings of passion, is
And hath the name of God. Transcendent peace
And silence did await upon these thoughts
That were a frequent comfort to my youth.

And as I have read of one by shipwreck thrown
With fellow Sufferers whom the waves had spar'd
Upon a region uninhabited
An island of the Deep, who have brought
To land a single Volume and no more,
A treatise of Geometry, was used,
Although of food and clothing destitute,
And beyond common wretchedness depress'd,
To part from company and take this book,
Then first a self-taught pupil in those truths,
To spots remote and corners of the Isle
By the sea side, and draw his diagrams

With a long stick upon the sand, and thus
 Did oft beguile his sorrow, and almost
 Forget his feeling; even so, if things
 Producing like effect, from outward cause
 So different, may rightly be compar'd,
 So was it with me then, and so will be
 With Poets ever. Mighty is the charm
 Of those abstractions to a mind beset
 With images, and haunted by itself;
 And specially delightful unto me
 Was that clear Synthesis built up aloft
 So gracefully, even then when it appear'd
 No more than as a plaything, or a toy
 Embodied to the sense, not what it is
 In verity, an independent world
 Created out of pure Intelligence.

Such dispositions then were mine, almost
 Through grace of Heaven and inborn tenderness.
 And not to leave the picture of that time
 Imperfect, with these habits I must rank
 A melancholy from humours of the blood
 In part, and partly taken up, that lov'd
 A pensive sky, sad days, and piping winds,
 The twilight more than dawn, Autumn than Spring;
 A treasur'd and luxurious gloom, of choice
 And inclination mainly, and the mere
 Redundancy of youth's contentedness.
 Add unto this a multitude of hours
 Pilfer'd away by what the Bard who sang
 Of the Enchanter Indolence hath call'd
 "Good-natured lounging," and behold a map
 Of my Collegiate life, far less intense
 Than Duty call'd for, or without regard
 To Duty, might have sprung up of itself
 By change of accidents, or even, to speak
 Without unkindness, in another place.

In summer among distant nooks I rov'd
 Dovedale, or Yorkshire Dales, or through bye-tracts
 Of my own native region, and was blest

THE PRELUDE

Between these sundry wanderings with a joy
Above all joys, that seem'd another morn
Risen on mid noon, the presence, Friend, I mean
Of that sole Sister, she who hath been long
Thy Treasure also, thy true friend and mine,
Now, after separation desolate
Restor'd to me, such absence that she seem'd
A gift then first bestow'd. The gentle Banks
Of Emont, hitherto unnam'd in Song,
And that monastic Castle, on a Flat
Low-standing by the margin of the Stream,
A Mansion not unvisited of old
By Sidney, where, in sight of our Helvellyn,
Some snatches he might pen, for aught we know,
Of his Arcadia, by fraternal love
Inspir'd; that River and that mouldering Dome
Have seen us sit in many a summer hour,
My sister and myself, when having climb'd
In danger through some window's open space,
We look'd abroad, or on the Turret's head
Lay listening to the wild flowers and the grass,
As they gave out their whispers to the wind.
Another Maid there was, who also breath'd
A gladness o'er that season, then to me
By her exulting outside look of youth
And placid under-countenance, first endear'd,
That other Spirit, Coleridge, who is now
So near to us, that meek, confiding heart,
So revered by us both. O'er paths and fields
In all that neighbourhood, through narrow lanes
Of eglantine, and through the shady woods,
And o'er the Border Beacon, and the Waste
Of naked Pools, and common Craggs that lay
Expos'd on the bare Fell, was scatter'd love,
A spirit of pleasure and youth's golden gleam.
O Friend! we had not seen thee at that time;
And yet a power is on me and a strong
Confusion, and I seem to plant Thee there.
Far art Thou wander'd now in search of health,
And milder breezes, melancholy lot!
But Thou art with us, with us in the past,

The present, with us in the times to come:
 There is no grief, no sorrow, no despair,
 No languor, no dejection, no dismay,
 No absence scarcely can there be for those
 Who love as we do. Speed Thee well! divide
 The pleasure with us, thy returning strength
 Receive it daily as a joy of ours;
 Share with us thy fresh spirits, whether gift
 Of gales Etesian, or of loving thoughts.

I, too, have been a Wanderer; but, alas!
 How different is the fate of different men
 Though Twins almost in genius and in mind!
 Unknown unto each other, yea, and breathing
 As if in different elements, we were framed
 To bend at last to the same discipline,
 Predestin'd, if two Beings ever were,
 To seek the same delights, and have one health,
 One happiness. Throughout this narrative,
 Else sooner ended, I have known full well
 For whom I thus record the birth and growth
 Of gentleness, simplicity, and truth,
 And joyous loves that hallow innocent days
 Of peace and self-command. Of Rivers, Fields,
 And Groves, I speak to Thee, my Friend; to Thee,
 Who, yet a liveried School-Boy, in the depths
 Of the huge City, on the leaded Roof
 Of that wide Edifice, thy Home and School,
 Wast used to lie and gaze upon the clouds
 Moving in Heaven; or haply, tired of this,
 To shut thine eyes, and by internal light
 See trees, and meadows, and thy native Stream
 Far distant, thus beheld from year to year
 Of thy long exile. Nor could I forget
 In this late portion of my argument
 That scarcely had I finally resign'd
 My rights among those academic Bowers
 When Thou wert thither guided. From the heart
 Of London, and from Cloisters there Thou cam'st,
 And didst sit down in temperance and peace,
 A rigorous Student. What a stormy course

THE PRELUDE

Then follow'd. Oh! it is a pang that calls
For utterance, to think how small a change
Of circumstances might to Thee have spared
A world of pain, ripen'd ten thousand hopes
For ever wither'd. Through this retrospect
Of my own College life I still have had
Thy after sojourn in the self-same place
Present before my eyes; I have play'd with times,
(I speak of private business of the thought)
And accidents as children do with cards,
Or as a man, who, when his house is built,
A frame lock'd up in wood and stone, doth still,
In impotence of mind, by his fireside
Rebuild it to his liking. I have thought
Of Thee, thy learning, gorgeous eloquence
And all the strength and plumage of thy Youth,
Thy subtle speculations, toils abstruse
Among the Schoolmen, and platonic forms
Of wild ideal pageantry, shap'd out
From things well-match'd, or ill, and words for things,
The self-created sustenance of a mind
Debarr'd from Nature's living images,
Compell'd to be a life unto itself,
And unrelentingly possess'd by thirst
Of greatness, love, and beauty. Not alone,
Ah! surely not in singleness of heart
Should I have seen the light of evening fade
Upon the silent Cam, if we had met,
Even at that early time; I needs must hope,
Must feel, must trust, that my maturer age,
And temperance less willing to be mov'd,
My calmer habits and more steady voice
Would with an influence benign have sooth'd
Or chas'd away the airy wretchedness
That batten'd on thy youth. But thou hast trod,
In watchful meditation thou hast trod
A march of glory, which doth put to shame
These vain regrets; health suffers in thee; else
Such grief for Thee would be the weakest thought
That ever harbour'd in the breast of Man.

A passing word erewhile did lightly touch
 On wanderings of my own; and now to these
 My Poem leads me with an easier mind.
 The employments of three winters when I wore
 A student's gown have been already told,
 Or shadow'd forth, as far as there is need.
 When the third summer brought its liberty
 A Fellow Student and myself, he, too,
 A Mountaineer, together sallied forth
 And, Staff in hand, on foot pursu'd our way
 Towards the distant Alps. An open slight
 Of College cares and study was the scheme,
 Nor entertain'd without concern for those
 To whom my worldly interest were dear:
 But Nature then was sovereign in my heart,
 And mighty forms seizing a youthful Fancy
 Had given a charter to irregular hopes.
 In any age, without an impulse sent
 From work of Nations, and their goings-on,
 I should have been possessed by like desire:
 But 'twas a time when Europe was rejoiced,
 France standing on the top of golden hours,
 And human nature seeming born again.
 Bound, as I said, to the Alps, it was our lot
 To land at Calais on the very eve
 Of that great federal Day; and there we saw,
 In a mean City, and among a few,
 How bright a face is worn when joy of one
 Is joy of tens of millions. Southward thence
 We took our way direct through Hamlets, Towns,
 Gaudy with reliques of that Festival,
 Flowers left to wither on triumphal Arcs,
 And window-Garlands. On the public roads,
 And, once, three days successively, through paths
 By which our toilsome journey was abridg'd,
 Among sequester'd villages we walked,
 And found benevolence and blessedness
 Spread like a fragrance everywhere, like Spring
 That leaves no corner of the land untouch'd.
 Where Elms, for many and many a league, in files,
 With their thin umbrage, on the stately roads

THE PRELUDE

Of that great Kingdom, rustled o'er our heads,
For ever near us as we paced along,
'Twas sweet at such a time, with such delights
On every side, in prime of youthful strength,
To feed a Poet's tender melancholy
And fond conceit of sadness, to the noise
And gentle undulations which they made.
Unhous'd, beneath the Evening Star we saw
Dances of liberty, and, in late hours
Of darkness, dances in the open air.
Among the vine-clad Hills of Burgundy,
Upon the bosom of the gentle Saone
We glided forward with the flowing stream:
Swift Rhone, thou wert the wings on which we cut
Between thy lofty rocks! Enchanting show
Those woods, and farms, and orchards did present,
And single Cottages, and lurking Towns,
Reach after reach, procession without end
Of deep and stately Vales. A lonely Pair
Of Englishmen we were, and sail'd along
Cluster'd together with a merry crowd
Of those emancipated, with a host
Of Travellers, chiefly Delegates, returning
From the great Spousals newly solemniz'd
At their chief City in the sight of Heaven.
Like bees they swarm'd, gaudy and gay as bees;
Some vapour'd in the unruliness of joy
And flourish'd with their swords, as if to fight
The saucy air. In this blithe Company
We landed, took with them our evening Meal,
Guests welcome almost as the Angels were
To Abraham of old. The Supper done,
With flowing cups elate, and happy thoughts,
We rose at signal giv'n, and form'd a ring
And, hand in hand, danced round and round the Board;
All hearts were open, every tongue was loud
With amity and glee; we bore a name
Honour'd in France, the name of Englishmen,
And hospitably did they give us hail
As their forerunners in a glorious course,
And round and round the board they danced again.

With this same throng our voyage we pursu'd
 At early dawn; the Monastery Bells
 Made a sweet jingling in our youthful ears;
 The rapid River flowing without noise,
 And every Spire we saw among the rocks
 Spoke with a sense of peace, at intervals
 Touching the heart amid the boisterous Crew
 With which we were environ'd. Having parted
 From this glad Rout, the Convent of Chartreuse
 Received us two days days afterwards, and there
 We rested in an awful Solitude;
 Thence onward to the Country of the Swiss.

'Tis not my present purpose to retrace
 That variegated journey step by step:
 A march it was of military speed,
 And earth did charge her images and forms
 Before us, fast as clouds are chang'd in Heaven.
 Day after day, up early and down late,
 From vale to vale, from hill to hill we went
 From Province on to Province did we pass,
 Keen Hunters in a chase of fourteen weeks
 Eager as birds of prey, or as a Ship
 Upon the stretch when winds are blowing fair.
 Sweet coverts did we cross of pastoral life,
 Enticing Vallies, greeted them, and left
 Too soon, while yet the very flash and gleam
 Of salutation were not pass'd away.
 Oh! sorrow for the Youth who could have seen
 Unchasten'd, unsubdu'd, unaw'd, unrais'd
 To patriarchal dignity of mind,
 And pure simplicity of wish and will,
 Those sanctified abodes of peaceful Man.
 My heart leap'd up when first I did look down
 On that which was first seen of those deep haunts,
 A green recess, an aboriginal vale
 Quiet, and lorded over and possess'd
 By naked huts, wood-built, and sown like tents
 Or Indian cabins over the fresh lawns,
 And by the river side. That day we first
 Beheld the summit of Mont Blanc, and griev'd

THE PRELUDE

To have a soulless image on the eye
Which had usurp'd upon a living thought
That never more could be: the wondrous Vale
Of Chamouny did, on the following dawn,
With its dumb cataracts and streams of ice,
A motionless array of mighty waves,
Five rivers broad and vast, make rich amends,
And reconcil'd us to realities.
There small birds warble from the leafy trees,
The Eagle soareth in the element;
There doth the Reaper bind the yellow sheaf,
The Maiden spread the haycock in the sun,
While Winter like a tamed Lion walks
Descending from the mountain to make sport
Among the cottages by beds of flowers.

Whate'er in this wide circuit we beheld,
Or heard, was fitted to our unripe state
Of intellect and heart. By simple strains
Of feeling, the pure breath of real life,
We were not left untouch'd. With such a book
Before our eyes, we could not chuse but read
A frequent lesson of sound tenderness,
The universal reason of mankind,
The truth of Young and Old. Nor, side by side
Pacing, two brother Pilgrims, or alone
Each with his humour, could we fail to abound
(Craft this which hath been hinted at before)
In dreams and fictions pensively compos'd,
Dejection taken up for pleasure's sake,
And gilded sympathies; the willow wreath,
Even among those solitudes sublime,
And sober posies of funereal flowers,
Cull'd from the gardens of the Lady Sorrow,
Did sweeten many a meditative hour.

Yet still in me, mingling with these delights
Was something of stern mood, an under-thirst
Of vigour, never utterly asleep.
Far different dejection once was mine,
A deep and genuine sadness then I felt;

The circumstances here I will relate
 Even as they were. Upturning with a Band
 Of Travellers, from the Valais we had clomb
 Along the road that leads to Italy;
 A length of hours, making of these our Guides
 Did we advance, and having reach'd an Inn
 Among the mountains, we together ate
 Our noon's repast, from which the Travellers rose,
 Leaving us at the Board. Ere long we follow'd,
 Descending by the beaten road that led
 Right to a rivulet's edge, and there broke off.
 The only track now visible was one
 Upon the further side, right opposite,
 And up a lofty Mountain. This we took
 After a little scruple, and short pause,
 And climb'd with eagerness, though not, at length
 Without surprise, and some anxiety
 On finding that we did not overtake
 Our Comrades gone before. By fortunate chance,
 While every moment now increas'd our doubts,
 A Peasant met us, and from him we learn'd
 That to the place which had perplex'd us first
 We must descend, and there should find the road
 Which in the stony channel of the Stream
 Lay a few steps, and then along its banks;
 And further, that thenceforward all our course
 Was downwards, with the current of that Stream.
 Hard of belief, we question'd him again,
 And all the answers which the Man return'd
 To our inquiries, in their sense and substance,
 Translated by the feelings which we had
 Ended in this; *that we had crossed the Alps.*

Imagination! lifting up itself
 Before the eye and progress of my Song
 Like an unfather'd vapour; here that Power,
 In all the might of its endowments, came
 Athwart me; I was lost as in a cloud,
 Halted, without a struggle to break through.
 And now recovering, to my Soul I say
 I recognise thy glory; in such strength

Of usurpation, in such visitings
 Of awful promise, when the light of sense
 Goes out in flashes that have shewn to us
 The invisible world, doth Greatness make abode,
 There harbours whether we be young or old.
 Our destiny, our nature, and our home
 Is with infinitude, and only there;
 With hope it is, hope that can never die,
 Effort, and expectation, and desire,
 And something evermore about to be.
 The mind beneath such banners militant
 Thinks not of spoils or trophies, nor of aught
 That may attest its prowess, blest in thoughts
 That are their own perfection and reward,
 Strong in itself, and in the access of joy
 Which hides it like the overflowing Nile.

The dull and heavy slackening that ensued
 Upon those tidings by the Peasant given
 Was soon dislodg'd; downwards we hurried fast,
 And enter'd with the road which we had miss'd
 Into a narrow chasm; the brook and road
 Were fellow-travellers in this gloomy Pass,
 And with them did we journey several hours
 At a slow step. The immeasurable height
 Of woods decaying, never to be decay'd,
 The stationary blasts of water-falls,
 And every where along the hollow rent
 Winds thwarting winds, bewilder'd and forlorn,
 The torrents shooting from the clear blue sky,
 The rocks that mutter'd close upon our ears,
 Black drizzling crags that spake by the way-side
 As if a voice was in them, the sick sight
 And giddy prospect of the raving stream,
 The unfetter'd clouds, and region of the Heavens,
 Tumult and peace, the darkness and the light
 Were all like workings of one mind, the features
 Of the same face, blossoms upon one tree,
 Characters of the great Apocalypse,
 The types and symbols of Eternity,
 Of first and last, and midst, and without end.

That night our lodging was an Alpine House,
 An Inn, or Hospital, as they are nam'd,
 Standing in that same valley by itself,
 And close upon the confluence of two Streams;
 A dreary Mansion, large beyond all need,
 With high and spacious rooms, deafen'd and stunn'd
 By noise of waters, making innocent Sleep
 Lie melancholy among weary bones.

Upris'n betimes, our journey we renew'd,
 Led by the Stream, ere noon-day magnified
 Into a lordly River, broad and deep,
 Dimpling along in silent majesty,
 With mountains for its neighbours, and in view
 Of distant mountains and their snowy tops,
 And thus proceeding to Locarno's Lake,
 Fit resting-place for such a Visitant.
 —Locarno, spreading out in width like Heaven,
 And Como, thou, a treasure by the earth
 Kept to itself, a darling bosom'd up
 In Abyssinian privacy, I spake
 Of thee, thy chestnut woods, and garden plots
 Of Indian corn tended by dark-eyed Maids,
 Thy lofty steeps, and pathways roof'd with vines
 Winding from house to house, from town to town,
 Sole link that binds them to each other, walks
 League after league, and cloistral avenues
 Where silence is, if music be not there:
 While yet a Youth, undisciplin'd in Verse,
 Through fond ambition of my heart, I told
 Your praises; nor can I approach you now
 Ungreeted by a more melodious Song,
 Where tones of learned Art and Nature mix'd
 May frame enduring language. Like a breeze
 Or sunbeam over your domain I pass'd
 In motion without pause; but Ye have left
 Your beauty with me, an impassion'd sight
 Of colours and of forms, whose power is sweet
 And gracious, almost might I dare to say,
 As virtue is, or goodness, sweet as love
 Of the remembrance of a noble deed,

Or gentlest visitations of pure thought
 When God, the Giver of all joy, is thank'd
 Religiously, in silent blessedness,
 Sweet as this last herself; for such it is.

Through those delightful pathways we advanc'd,
 Two days, and still in presence of the Lake,
 Which, winding up among the Alps, now chang'd
 Slowly its lovely countenance, and put on
 A sterner character. The second night,
 In eagerness, and by report misled
 Of those Italian clocks that speak the time
 In fashion different from ours, we rose
 By moonshine, doubting not that day was near,
 And that, meanwhile, coasting the Water's edge
 As hitherto, and with as plain a track
 To be our guide, we might behold the scene
 In its most deep repose.—We left the Town
 Of Gravedona with this hope; but soon
 Were lost, bewilder'd among woods immense,
 Where, having wander'd for a while, we stopp'd
 And on a rock sate down, to wait for day.
 An open place it was, and overlook'd,
 From high, the sullen water underneath,
 On which a dull red image of the moon
 Lay bedded, changing oftentimes its form
 Like an uneasy snake: long time we sate,
 For scarcely more than one hour of the night,
 Such was our error, had been gone, when we
 Renew'd our journey. On the rock we lay
 And wish'd to sleep but could not, for the stings
 Of insects, which with noise like that of noon
 Fill'd all the woods; the cry of unknown birds,
 The mountains, more by darkness visible
 And their own size, than any outward light,
 The breathless wilderness of clouds, the clock
 That told with unintelligible voice
 The widely-parted hours, the noise of streams
 And sometimes rustling motions nigh at hand
 Which did not leave us free from personal fear,
 And lastly the withdrawing Moon, that set

Before us, while she still was high in heaven,
 These were our food, and such a summer's night
 Did to that pair of golden days succeed,
 With now and then a doze and snatch of sleep,
 On Como's Banks, the same delicious Lake.

But here I must break off, and quit at once,
 Though loth, the record of these wanderings,
 A theme which may seduce me else beyond
 All reasonable bounds. Let this alone
 Be mention'd as a parting word, that not
 In hollow exultation, dealing forth
 Hyperboles of praise comparative,
 Not rich one moment to be poor for ever,
 Not prostrate, overborn, as if the mind
 Itself were nothing, a mean pensioner
 On outward forms, did we in presence stand
 Of that magnificent region. On the front
 Of this whole Song is written that my heart
 Must in such temple needs have offer'd up
 A different worship. Finally whate'er
 I saw, or heard, or felt, was but a stream
 That flow'd into a kindred stream, a gale
 That help'd me forwards, did administer
 To grandeur and to tenderness, to the one
 Directly, but to tender thoughts by means
 Less often instantaneous in effect;
 Conducted me to these along a path
 Which in the main was more circuitous.

Oh! most beloved Friend, a glorious time
 A happy time that was; triumphant looks
 Were then the common language of all eyes:
 As if awak'd from sleep, the Nations hail'd
 Their great expectancy: the fife of War
 Was then a spirit-stirring sound indeed,
 A Blackbird's whistle in a vernal grove.
 We left the Swiss exulting in the fate
 Of their near Neighbours, and when shortening fast
 Our pilgrimage, nor distant far from home,
 We cross'd the Brabant Armies on the fret

THE PRELUDE

For battle in the cause of Liberty.
A Stripling, scarcely of the household then
Of social life, I look'd upon these things
As from a distance, heard, and saw, and felt,
Was touch'd, but with no intimate concern;
I seem'd to move among them as a bird
Moves through the air, or as a fish pursues
Its business, in its proper element;
I needed not that joy, I did not need
Such help; the ever-living Universe,
And independent spirit of pure youth
Were with me at that season, and delight
Was in all places spread around my steps
As constant as the grass upon the fields.

BOOK SEVENTH

Residence in London

FIVE years are vanish'd since I first pour'd out
Saluted by that animating breeze
Which met me issuing from the City's Walls,
A glad preamble to this Verse: I sang
Aloud, in Dythyrambic fervour, deep
But short-liv'd uproar, like a torrent sent
Out of the bowels of a bursting cloud
Down Scafell, or Blencathra's rugged sides,
A waterspout from Heaven. But 'twas not long
Ere the interrupted stream broke forth once more,
And flow'd awhile in strength, then stopp'd for years;
Not heard again until a little space
Before last primrose-time. Beloved Friend,
The assurances then given unto myself,
Which did beguile me of some heavy thoughts
At thy departure to a foreign Land,
Have fail'd; for slowly doth this work advance.
Through the whole summer have I been at rest,
Partly from voluntary holiday
And part through outward indolence. But I heard,
After the hour of sunset yester even,

Sitting within doors betwixt light and dark,
 A voice that stirr'd me. 'Twas a little Band,
 A Quire of Redbreasts gather'd somewhere near
 My threshold, Minstrels from the distant woods
 And dells, sent in by Winter to bespeak
 For the Old Man a welcome, to announce,
 With preparation artful and benign,
 Yea the most gentle music of the year,
 That their rough Lord had left the surly North
 And hath begun his journey. A delight,
 At this unthought of greeting, unawares
 Smote me, a sweetness of the coming time,
 And listening, I half whispered, "We will be
 Ye heartsome Choristers, ye and I will be
 Brethren, and in the hearing of bleak winds
 Will chaunt together." And, thereafter, walking
 By later twilight on the hills, I saw
 A Glow-worm from beneath a dusky shade
 Or canopy of the yet unwithered fern,
 Clear-shining, like a Hermit's taper seen
 Through a thick forest; silence touch'd me here
 No less than sound had done before; the Child
 Of Summer, lingering, shining by itself,
 The voiceless Worm on the unfrequented hills,
 Seem'd sent on the same errand with the Quire
 Of Winter that had warbled at my door,
 And the whole year seem'd tenderness and love.

The last Night's genial feeling overflow'd
 Upon this morning, and my favourite grove,
 Now tossing its dark boughs in sun and wind
 Spreads through me a commotion like its own,
 Something that fits me for the Poet's task,
 Which we will now resume with chearful hope,
 Nor check'd by aught of tamer argument
 That lies before us, needful to be told.

Return'd from that excursion, soon I bade
 Farewell for ever to the private Bowers
 Of gown'd Students, quitted these, no more
 To enter them, and pitch'd my vagrant tent,

THE PRELUDE

A casual Reveller and at large, among
The unfenc'd regions of society.

Yet undetermin'd to what plan of life
I should adhere, and seeming thence to have
A little space of intermediate time
Loose and at full command, to London first
I turn'd, if not in calmness, nevertheless
In no disturbance of excessive hope,
At ease from all ambition personal,
Frugal as there was need, and though self-will'd,
Yet temperate and reserv'd, and wholly free
From dangerous passions. 'Twas at least two years
Before this season when I first beheld
That mighty place, a transient visitant:
And now it pleas'd me my abode to fix
Single in the wide waste, to have a house
It was enough (what matter for a home?)
That own'd me; living chearfully abroad,
With fancy on the stir from day to day,
And all my young affections out of doors.

There was a time when whatsoe'er is feign'd
Of airy Palaces, and Gardens built
By Genii of Romance, or hath in grave
Authentic History been set forth of Rome,
Alcairo, Babylon, or Persepolis,
Or given upon report by Pilgrim-Friars
Of golden Cities ten months' journey deep
Among Tartarian wilds, fell short, far short,
Of that which I in simpleness believed
And thought of London; held me by a chain
Less strong of wonder, and obscure delight.
I know not that herein I shot beyond
The common mark of childhood; but I well
Remember that among our flock of Boys
Was one, a Cripple from his birth, whom chance
Summon'd from School to London, fortunate
And envied Traveller! and when he return'd,
After short absence, and I first set eyes
Upon his person, verily, though strange

The thing may seem, I was not wholly free
 From disappointment to behold the same
 Appearance, the same body, not to find
 Some change, some beams of glory brought away
 From that new region. Much I question'd him,
 And every word he utter'd, on my ears
 Fell flatter than a caged Parrot's note,
 That answers unexpectedly awry,
 And mocks the Prompter's listening. Marvellous things
 My fancy had shap'd forth, of sights and shows,
 Processions, Equipages, Lords and Dukes,
 The King, and the King's Palace, and not last
 Or least, heaven bless him! the renown'd Lord Mayor:
 Dreams hardly less intense than those which wrought
 A change of purpose in young Whittington,
 When he in friendliness, a drooping Boy
 Sate on a Stone, and heard the Bells speak out
 Articulate music. Above all, one thought
 Baffled my understanding, how men lived
 Even next-door neighbours, as we say, yet still
 Strangers, and knowing not each other's names.

Oh wond'rous power of words, how sweet they are
 According to the meaning which they bring!
 Vauxhall and Ranelagh, I then had heard
 Of your green groves, and wilderness of lamps,
 Your gorgeous Ladies, fairy cataracts,
 And pageant fireworks; nor must we forget
 Those other wonders different in kind,
 Though scarcely less illustrious in degree,
 The River proudly bridged, the giddy top
 And Whispering Gallery of St. Paul's, the Tombs
 Of Westminster, the Giants of Guildhall,
 Bedlam, and the two maniacs at its Gates,
 Streets without end, and Churches numberless,
 Statues, with flowery gardens in vast Squares,
 The Monument, and Armoury of the Tower.

These fond imaginations of themselves
 Had long before given way in season due,
 Leaving a throng of others in their stead;

THE PRELUDE

And now I looked upon the real scene,
Familiarly perus'd it day by day
With keen and lively pleasure even there
Where disappointment was the strongest, pleas'd
Through courteous self-submission, as a tax
Paid to the object by prescriptive right,
A thing that ought to be. Shall I give way,
Copying the impression of the memory,
Though things unnumber'd idly do half seem
The work of fancy, shall I, as the mood
Inclines me, here describe, for pastime's sake
Some portion of that motley imagery,
A vivid pleasure of my Youth, and now
Among the lonely places that I love
A frequent day-dream for my riper mind?
—And first the look and aspect of the place
The broad high-way appearance, as it strikes
On Strangers of all ages, the quick dance
Of colours, lights and forms, the Babel din
The endless stream of men, and moving things,
From hour to hour the illimitable walk
Still among streets with clouds and sky above,
The wealth, the bustle and the eagerness,
The glittering Chariots with their pamper'd Steeds,
Stalls, Barrows, Porters; midway in the Street
The Scavenger, who begs with hat in hand,
The labouring Hackney Coaches, the rash speed
Of Coaches travelling far, whirl'd on with horn
Loud blowing, and the sturdy Drayman's Team,
Ascending from some Alley of the Thames
And striking right across the crowded Strand
Till the fore Horse veer round with punctual skill:
Here there and everywhere a weary throng
The Comers and the Goers face to face,
Face after face; the string of dazzling Wares,
Shop after shop, with Symbols, blazon'd Names,
And all the Tradesman's honours overhead;
Here, fronts of houses, like a title-page
With letters huge inscribed from top to toe;
Station'd above the door, like guardian Saints,
There, allegoric shapes, female or male;

Or physiognomies of real men,
 Land-Warriors, Kings, or Admirals of the Sea,
 Boyle, Shakespear, Newton, or the attractive head
 Of some Scotch doctor, famous in his day.

Meanwhile the roar continues, till at length,
 Escaped as from an enemy, we turn
 Abruptly into some sequester'd nook
 Still as a shelter'd place when winds blow loud:
 At leisure thence, through tracts of thin resort,
 And sights and sounds that come at intervals,
 We take our way: a raree-show is here
 With children gather'd round, another Street
 Presents a company of dancing Dogs,
 Or Dromedary, with an antic pair
 Of Monkeys on his back, a minstrel Band
 Of Savoyards, or, single and alone,
 An English Ballad-singer. Private Courts,
 Gloomy as Coffins, and unsightly Lanes
 Thrill'd by some female Vender's scream, belike
 The very shrillest of all London Cries,
 May then entangle us awhile,
 Conducted through those labyrinths unawares
 To privileg'd Regions and inviolate,
 Where from their airy lodges studious Lawyers
 Look out on waters, walks, and gardens green.

Thence back into the throng, until we reach,
 Following the tide that slackens by degrees,
 Some half-frequented scene where wider Streets
 Bring straggling breezes of suburban air;
 Here files of ballads dangle from dead walls,
 Advertisements of giant-size, from high
 Press forward in all colours on the sight;
 These, bold in conscious merit; lower down
 That, fronted with a most imposing word,
 Is, peradventure, one in masquerade.
 As on the broadening Causeway we advance,
 Behold a Face turn'd up toward us, strong
 In lineaments, and red with over-toil;
 'Tis one perhaps, already met elsewhere,

THE PRELUDE

A travelling Cripple, by the trunk cut short,
And stumping with his arms: in Sailor's garb
Another lies at length beside a range
Of written characters, with chalk inscrib'd
Upon the smooth flat stones: the Nurse is here,
The Bachelor that loves to sun himself,
The military Idler, and the Dame,
That field-ward takes her walk in decency.

Now homeward through the thickening hubbub, where
See, among less distinguishable shapes,
The Italian, with his frame of Images
Upon his head; with Basket at his waist
The Jew; the stately and slow-moving Turk
With freight of slippers piled beneath his arm.
Briefly, we find, if tired of random sights
And haply to that search our thoughts should turn,
Among the crowd, conspicuous less or more,
As we proceed, all specimens of Man
Through all the colours which the sun bestows,
And every character of form and face,
The Swede, the Russian; from the genial South,
The Frenchman and the Spaniard; from remote
America, the Hunter-Indian; Moors,
Malays, Lascars, the Tartar and Chinese,
And Negro Ladies in white muslin gowns.

At leisure let us view, from day to day,
As they present themselves, the Spectacles
Within doors, troops of wild Beasts, birds and beasts
Of every nature, from all climes conven'd;
And, next to these, those mimic sights that ape
The absolute presence of reality,
Expressing, as in mirror, sea and land,
And what earth is, and what she has to shew;
I do not here allude to subtlest craft,
By means refin'd attaining purest ends,
But imitations fondly made in plain
Confession of Man's weakness, and his loves.
Whether the Painter fashioning a work
To Nature's circumambient scenery,

And with his greedy pencil taking in
 A whole horizon with power on all sides,
 Like that of Angels or commission'd Spirits,
 Plant us upon some lofty Pinnacle,
 Or in a Ship on Waters, with a world
 Of life, and life-like mockery, to East,
 To West, beneath, behind us, and before;
 Or more mechanic Artist represent
 By scale exact, in Model, wood or clay,
 From shading colours also borrowing help,
 Some miniature of famous spots and things
 Domestic, or the boast of foreign Realms;
 The Firth of Forth, and Edinburgh throned
 On crags, fit empress of that mountain Land;
 St. Peter's Church; or, more aspiring aim,
 In microscopic vision, Rome itself;
 Or, else perhaps, some rural haunt, the Falls
 Of Tivoli, and high upon that steep
 The Temple of the Sibyl, every tree
 Through all the landscape, tuft, stone, scratch minute,
 And every Cottage, lurking in the rocks,
 All that the Traveller sees when he is there.

Add to these exhibitions mute and still
 Others of wider scope, where living men,
 Music, and shifting pantomimic scenes,
 Together join'd their multifarious aid
 To heighten the allurements. Need I fear
 To mention by its name, as in degree
 Lowest of these, and humblest in attempt,
 Though richly graced with honours of its own,
 Half-rural Sadler's Wells? Though at that time
 Intolerant, as is the way of Youth
 Unless itself be pleased, I more than once
 Here took my seat, and, maugre frequent fits
 Of irksomeness, with ample recompense
 Saw Singers, Rope-dancers, Giants and Dwarfs,
 Clowns, Conjurors, Posture-masters, Harlequins,
 Amid the uproar of the rabblement,
 Perform their feats. Nor was it mean delight
 To watch crude nature work in untaught minds,

THE PRELUDE

To note the laws and progress of belief;
Though obstinate on this way, yet on that
How willingly we travel, and how far!
To have, for instance, brought upon the scene
The Champion Jack the Giant-killer, Lo!
He dons his Coat of Darkness; on the Stage
Walks, and atchieves his wonders from the eye
Of living mortal safe as is the moon
“Hid in her vacant interlunar cave.”
Delusion bold! and faith must needs be coy;
How is it wrought? His garb is black, the word
INVISIBLE flames forth upon his chest.

Nor was it unassuming here to view
Those samples as of ancient Comedy
And Thespian times, dramas of living Men,
And recent things, yet warm with life; a Sea-fight,
Shipwreck, or some domestic incident
The fame of which is scatter'd through the Land;
Such as the daring brotherhood of late
Set forth, too holy theme for such a place,
And doubtless treated with irreverence
Albeit with their very best of skill,
I mean, O distant Friend! a Story drawn
From our own ground, the Maid of Buttermere,
And how the Spoiler came, “a bold bad Man”
To God unfaithful, Children, Wife, and Home,
And wooed the artless Daughter of the hills,
And wedded her, in cruel mockery
Of love and marriage bonds. O Friend! I speak
With tender recollection of that time
When first we saw the Maiden, then a name
By us unheard of; in her cottage Inn
Were welcomed, and attended on by her
Both stricken with one feeling of delight,
An admiration of her modest mien,
And carriage, mark'd by unexampled grace.
Not unfamiliarly we since that time
Have seen her; her discretion have observ'd,
Her just opinions, female modesty,
Her patience, and retiredness of mind

Unsoil'd by commendation, and the excess
 Of public notice. This memorial Verse
 Comes from the Poet's heart, and is her due.
 For we were nursed, as almost might be said,
 On the same mountains; Children at one time
 Must haply often on the self-same day
 Have from our several dwellings gone abroad
 To gather daffodils on Coker's Stream.

These last words utter'd, to my argument
 I was returning, when, with sundry Forms
 Mingled, that in the way which I must tread
 Before me stand, thy image rose again,
 Mary of Buttermere! She lives in peace
 Upon the ground where she was born and rear'd;
 Without contamination does she live
 In quietness, without anxiety:
 Beside the mountain-Chapel sleeps in earth
 Her new-born Infant, fearless as a lamb
 That thither comes, from some unsheltered place,
 To rest beneath the little rock-like Pile
 When storms are blowing. Happy are they both
 Mother and Child! These feelings, in themselves
 Trite, do yet scarcely seem so when I think
 On those ingenuous moments of our youth,
 Ere yet by use we have learn'd to slight the crimes
 And sorrows of the world. Those days are now
 My theme; and, mid the numerous scenes which they
 Have left behind them, foremost I am cross'd
 Here by remembrance of two figures, One
 A rosy Babe, who, for a twelvemonth's space
 Perhaps, had been of age to deal about
 Articulate prattle, Child as beautiful
 As ever sate upon a Mother's knee;
 The other was the Parent of that Babe;
 But on the Mother's cheek the tints were false,
 A painted bloom. 'Twas at a Theatre
 That I beheld this Pair; the Boy had been
 The pride and pleasure of all lookers-on
 In whatsoever place; but seem'd in this
 A sort of Alien scatter'd from the clouds.

THE PRELUDE

Of lusty vigour, more than infantine,
He was in limbs, in face a cottage rose
Just three parts blown; a Cottage Child, but ne'er
Saw I, by Cottage or elsewhere, a Babe
By Nature's gifts so honor'd. Upon a Board
Whence an attendant of the Theatre
Serv'd out refreshments, had this Child been plac'd,
And there he sate, environ'd with a Ring
Of chance Spectators, chiefly dissolute men
And shameless women; treated and caress'd,
Ate, drank, and with the fruit and glasses play'd,
While oaths, indecent speech, and ribaldry
Were rife about him as are songs of birds
In spring-time after showers. The Mother, too,
Was present! but of her I know no more
Than hath been said, and scarcely at this time
Do I remember her. But I behold
The lovely Boy as I beheld him then,
Among the wretched and the falsely gay,
Like one of those who walk'd with hair unsinged
Amid the fiery furnace. He hath since
Appear'd to me oft times as if embalm'd
By Nature; through some special privilege,
Stopp'd at the growth he had; destined to live,
To be, to have been, come and go, a Child
And nothing more, no partner in the years
That bear us forward to distress and guilt,
Pain and abasement, beauty in such excess
Adorn'd him in that miserable place.
So have I thought of him a thousand times,
And seldom otherwise. But he perhaps
Mary! may now have liv'd till he could look
With envy on thy nameless Babe that sleeps
Beside the mountain Chapel, undisturb'd!

It was but little more than three short years
Before the season which I speak of now
When first, a Traveller from our pastoral hills,
Southward two hundred miles I had advanced,
And for the first time in my life did hear
The Voice of Woman utter blasphemy;

Saw Woman as she is to open shame
 Abandon'd and the pride of public vice.
 Full surely from the bottom of my heart
 I shuddered; but the pain was almost lost,
 Absorb'd and buried in the immensity
 Of the effect: a barrier seemed at once
 Thrown in, that from humanity divorced
 The Human Form, splitting the race of Man
 In twain, yet leaving the same outward shape.
 Distress of mind ensued upon this sight
 And ardent meditation; afterwards
 A milder sadness on such spectacles
 Attended; thought, commiseration, grief
 For the individual, and the overthrow
 Of her soul's beauty; farther at that time
 Than this I was but seldom led; in truth
 The sorrow of the passion stopp'd me here.

I quit this painful theme; enough is said
 To shew what thoughts must often have been mine
 At theatres, which then were my delight,
 A yearning made more strong by obstacles
 Which slender funds imposed. Life then was new,
 The senses easily pleased; the lustres, lights,
 The carving and the gilding, paint and glare,
 And all the mean upholstery of the place,
 Wanted not animation in my sight:
 Far less the living Figures on the Stage,
 Solemn or gay: whether some beauteous Dame
 Advanced in radiance through a deep recess
 Of thick-entangled forest, like the Moon
 Opening the clouds; or sovereign King, announced
 With flourishing Trumpets, came in full-blown State
 Of the world's greatness, winding round with Train
 Of Courtiers, Banners, and a length of Guards;
 Or Captive led in abject weeds, and jingling
 His slender manacles; or romping Girl
 Bounced, leapt, and paw'd the air; or mumbling Sire,
 A scare-crow pattern of old Age, patch'd up
 Of all the tatters of infirmity,
 All loosely put together, hobbled in,

THE PRELUDE

Stumping upon a Cane, with which he smites,
From time to time, the solid boards, and makes them
Prate somewhat loudly of the whereabouts
Of one so overloaded with his years.
But what of this! the laugh, the grin, grimace,
And all the antics and buffoonery,
The least of them not lost, were all received
With charitable pleasure. Through the night,
Between the show, and many-headed mass
Of the Spectators, and each little nook
That had its fray or brawl, how eagerly,
And with what flashes, as it were, the mind
Turn'd this way, that way! sportive and alert
And watchful, as a kitten when at play,
While winds are blowing round her, among grass
And rustling leaves. Enchanting age and sweet!
Romantic almost, looked at through a space,
How small of intervening years! For then,
Though surely no mean progress had been made
In meditations holy and sublime,
Yet something of a girlish child-like gloss
Of novelty surviv'd for scenes like these;
Pleasure that had been handed down from times
When, at a Country-Playhouse, having caught,
In summer, through the fractur'd wall, a glimpse
Of daylight, at the thought of where I was
I gladden'd more than if I had beheld
Before me some bright cavern of Romance,
Or than we do, when on our beds we lie
At night, in warmth, when rains are beating hard.

The matter that detains me now will seem,
To many neither dignified enough
Nor arduous; and is, doubtless, in itself
Humble and low; yet not to be despis'd
By those who have observ'd the curious props
By which the perishable hours of life
Rest on each other, and the world of thought
Exists and is sustain'd. More lofty Themes,
Such as, at least, do wear a prouder face,
Might here be spoken of; but when I think

Of these, I feel the imaginative Power
 Languish within me; even then it slept
 When, wrought upon by tragic sufferings,
 The heart was full; amid my sobs and tears
 It slept, even in the season of my youth:
 For though I was most passionately moved
 And yielded to the changes of the scene
 With most obsequious feeling, yet all this
 Pass'd not beyond the suburbs of the mind:
 If aught there were of real grandeur here
 'Twas only then when gross realities,
 The incarnation of the Spirits that mov'd
 Amid the Poet's beauteous world, call'd forth,
 With that distinctness which a contrast gives
 Or opposition, made me recognize
 As by a glimpse, the things which I had shap'd
 And yet not shaped, had seen, and scarcely seen,
 Had felt, and thought of in my solitude.

Pass we from entertainments that are such
 Professedly to others titled higher,
 Yet in the estimate of youth at least,
 More near akin to those than names imply,
 I mean the brawls of Lawyers in their Courts
 Before the ermined Judge, or that great Stage
 Where Senators, tongue-favour'd Men, perform,
 Admir'd and envied. Oh! the beating heart!
 When one among the prime of these rose up
 One, of whose name from Childhood we had heard
 Familiarly, a household term, like those,
 The Bedfords, Glocesters, Salisburys of old,
 Which the fifth Harry talks of. Silence! hush!
 This is no trifler, no short-flighted Wit,
 No stammerer of a minute, painfully
 Deliver'd. No! the Orator hath yoked
 The Hours, like young Aurora, to his Car;
 O Presence of delight, can patience e'er
 Grow weary of attending on a track
 That kindles with such glory? Marvellous!
 The enchantment spreads and rises; all are rapt
 Astonish'd; like a Hero in Romance

THE PRELUDE

He winds away his never-ending horn,
Words follow words, sense seems to follow sense;
What memory and what logic! till the Strain
Transcendent, superhuman as it is,
Grows tedious even in a young Man's ear.

These are grave follies: other public Shows
The capital City teems with, of a kind
More light, and where but in the holy Church?
There have I seen a comely Bachelor,
Fresh from toilette of two hours, ascend
The Pulpit, with seraphic glance look up,
And, in a tone elaborately low
Beginning, lead his voice through many a maze,
A minuet course, and winding up his mouth,
From time to time into an orifice
Most delicate, a lurking eyelet, small
And only not invisible, again
Open it out, diffusing thence a smile
Of rapt irradiation exquisite.
Meanwhile the Evangelists, Isaiah, Job,
Moses, and he who penn'd the other day
The Death of Abel, Shakespear, Doctor Young,
And Ossian, (doubt not, 'tis the naked truth)
Summon'd from streamy Morven, each and all
Must in their turn lend ornament and flowers
To entwine the Crook of eloquence with which
This pretty Shepherd, pride of all the Plains,
Leads up and down his captivated Flock.

I glance but at a few conspicuous marks,
Leaving ten thousand others, that do each,
In Hall or Court, Conventicle, or Shop,
In public Room or private, Park or Street,
With fondness rear'd on his own Pedestal,
Look out for admiration. Folly, vice,
Extravagance in gesture, mien, and dress,
And all the strife of singularity,
Lies to the ear, and lies to every sense,
Of these, and of the living shapes they wear,
There is no end. Such Candidates for regard,
Although well pleased to be where they were found,

I did not hunt after, or greatly prize,
 Nor made unto myself a secret boast
 Of reading them with quick and curious eye;
 But as a common produce, things that are
 To-day, to-morrow will be, took of them
 Such willing note as, on some errand bound
 Of pleasure or of Love some Traveller might,
 Among a thousand other images,
 Of sea-shells that bestud the sandy beach,
 Or daisies swarming through the fields in June.

But foolishness, and madness in parade,
 Though most at home in this their dear domain,
 Are scatter'd everywhere, no rarities,
 Even to the rudest novice of the Schools.
 O Friend! one feeling was there which belong'd
 To this great City, by exclusive right;
 How often in the overflowing Streets,
 Have I gone forward with the Crowd, and said
 Unto myself, the face of every one
 That passes by me is a mystery.
 Thus have I look'd, nor ceas'd to look, oppress'd
 By thoughts of what, and whither, when and how,
 Until the shapes before my eyes became
 A second-sight procession, such as glides
 Over still mountains, or appears in dreams;
 And all the ballast of familiar life,
 The present, and the past; hope, fear; all stays,
 All laws of acting, thinking, speaking man
 Went from me, neither knowing me, nor known.
 And once, far-travell'd in such mood, beyond
 The reach of common indications, lost
 Amid the moving pageant, 'twas my chance
 Abruptly to be smitten with the view
 Of a blind Beggar, who, with upright face,
 Stood propp'd against a Wall, upon his Chest
 Wearing a written paper, to explain
 The story of the Man, and who he was.
 My mind did at this spectacle turn round
 As with the might of waters, and it seem'd
 To me that in this Label was a type,

THE PRELUDE

Or emblem, of the utmost that we know,
Both of ourselves and of the universe;
And, on the shape of the unmoving man,
His fixèd face and sightless eyes, I look'd
As if admonish'd from another world.

Though rear'd upon the base of outward things,
These, chiefly, are such structures as the mind
Builds for itself. Scenes different there are,
Full form'd, which take, with small internal help,
Possession of the faculties; the peace
Of night, for instance, the solemnity
Of nature's intermediate hours of rest,
When the great tide of human life stands still,
The business of the day to come unborn,
Of that gone by, lock'd up as in the grave;
The calmness, beauty, of the spectacle,
Sky, stillness, moonshine, empty streets, and sounds
Unfrequent as in desarts; at late hours
Of winter evenings when unwholesome rains
Are falling hard, with people yet astir,
The feeble salutation from the voice
Of some unhappy Woman, now and then
Heard as we pass; when no one looks about,
Nothing is listen'd to. But these, I fear,
Are falsely catalogu'd, things that are, are not,
Even as we give them welcome, or assist,
Are prompt, or are remiss. What say you then,
To times, when half the City shall break out
Full of one passion, vengeance, rage, or fear,
To executions, to a Stréet on fire,
Mobs, riots, or rejoicings? From these sights
Take one, an annual Festival, the Fair
Holden where Martyrs suffer'd in past time,
And named of Saint Bartholomew; there see
A work that's finish'd to our hands, that lays,
If any spectacle on earth can do,
The whole creative powers of man asleep!
For once the Muse's help will we implore,
And she shall lodge us, wafted on her wings,
Above the press and danger of the Crowd,

Upon some Showman's platform: what a hell
 For eyes and ears! what anarchy and din
 Barbarian and infernal! 'tis a dream,
 Monstrous in colour, motion, shape, sight, sound.
 Below, the open space, through every nook
 Of the wide area, twinkles, is alive
 With heads; the midway region and above
 Is throng'd with staring pictures, and huge scrolls,
 Dumb proclamations of the prodigies;
 And chattering monkeys dangling from their poles,
 And children whirling in their roundabouts;
 With those that stretch the neck, and strain the eyes,
 And crack the voice in rivalry, the crowd
 Inviting; with buffoons against buffoons
 Grimacing, writhing, screaming; him who grinds
 The hurdy-gurdy, at the fiddle weaves;
 Rattles the salt-box, thumps the kettle-drum,
 And him who at the trumpet puffs his cheeks,
 The silver-collar'd Negro with his timbrel,
 Equestrians, Tumblers, Women, Girls, and Boys,
 Blue-breech'd, pink-vested, and with towering plumes.
 —All moveables of wonder from all parts,
 Are here, Albinos, painted Indians, Dwarfs,
 The Horse of Knowledge, and the learned Pig,
 The Stone-eater, the Man that swallows fire,
 Giants, Ventriloquists, the Invisible Girl,
 The Bust that speaks, and moves its goggling eyes,
 The Wax-work, Clock-work, all the marvellous craft
 Of modern Merlins, wild Beasts, Puppet-shows,
 All out-o'-the-way, far-fetch'd, perverted things,
 All freaks of Nature, all Promethean thoughts
 Of Man; his dulness, madness, and their feats,
 All jumbled up together to make up
 This Parliament of Monsters. Tents and Booths
 Meanwhile, as if the whole were one vast Mill,
 Are vomiting, receiving, on all sides,
 Men, Women, three-years' Children, Babes in arms.

Oh, blank confusion! and a type not false
 Of what the mighty City is itself
 To all except a Straggler here and there,

THE PRELUDE

To the whole Swarm of its inhabitants;
An undistinguishable world to men,
The slaves unrespited of low pursuits,
Living amid the same perpetual flow
Of trivial objects, melted and reduced
To one identity, by differences
That have no law, no meaning, and no end;
Oppression under which even highest minds
Must labour, whence the strongest are not free;
But though the picture weary out the eye,
By nature an unmanageable sight,
It is not wholly so to him who looks
In steadiness, who hath among least things
An under-sense of greatest; sees the parts
As parts, but with a feeling of the whole.
This, of all acquisitions first, awaits
On sundry and most widely different modes
Of education; nor with least delight
On that through which I pass'd. Attention comes,
And comprehensiveness and memory,
From early converse with the works of God
Among all regions; chiefly where appear
Most obviously simplicity and power.
By influence habitual to the mind
The mountain's outline and its steady form
Gives a pure grandeur, and its presence shapes
The measure and the prospect of the soul
To majesty; such virtue have the forms
Perennial of the ancient hills; nor less
The changeful language of their countenances
Gives movement to the thoughts, and multitude,
With order and relation. This, if still,
As hitherto, with freedom I may speak,
And the same perfect openness of mind,
Nor violating any just restraint,
As I would hope, of real modesty,
This did I feel in that vast receptacle.
The Spirit of Nature was upon me here;
The Soul of Beauty and enduring life
Was present as a habit, and diffused,
Through meagre lines and colours, and the press

Of self-destroying, transitory things
Composure and ennobling Harmony.

BOOK EIGHTH

*Retrospect.—Love of Nature Leading to Love
Mankind*

WHAT sounds are those, Helvellyn, which are heard
Up to the summit? Through the depth of air
Ascending, as if distance had the power
To make the sounds more audible: what Crowd
Is yon, assembled in the gay green Field?
Crowd seems it, solitary Hill! to thee,
Though but a little Family of Men,
Twice twenty, with their Children and their Wives,
And here and there a Stranger interspers'd.
It is a summer festival, a Fair,
Such as, on this side now, and now on that,
Repeated through his tributary Vales,
Helvellyn, in the silence of his rest,
Sees annually, if storms be not abroad,
And mists have left him an unshrouded head.
Delightful day it is for all who dwell
In this secluded Glen, and eagerly
They give it welcome. Long ere heat of noon
Behold the cattle are driven down; the sheep
That have for traffic been cull'd out are penn'd
In cotes that stand together on the Plain
Ranged side by side; the chaffering is begun.
The Heifer lows uneasy at the voice
Of a new Master, bleat the Flocks aloud;
Booths are there none; a Stall or two is here,
A lame Man, or a blind, the one to beg,
The other to make music; hither, too,
From far, with Basket, slung upon her arm,
Of Hawker's Wares, books, pictures, combs, and pins,
Some aged Woman finds her way again,
Year after year a punctual visitant!
The Showman with his Freight upon his Back,

THE PRELUDE

And once, perchance, in lapse of many years
Prouder Itinerant, Mountebank, or He
Whose Wonders in a cover'd Wain lie hid.
But One is here, the loveliest of them all,
Some sweet Lass of the Valley, looking out
For gains, and who that sees her would not buy?
Fruits of her Father's Orchard, apples, pears,
(On that day only to such office stooping)
She carries in her Basket, and walks round
Among the crowd, half pleas'd with, half ashamed
Of her new calling, blushing restlessly.
The Children now are rich, the old Man now
Is generous; so gaiety prevails
Which all partake of, Young and Old. Immense
Is the Recess, the circumambient World
Magnificent, by which they are embraced.
They move about upon the soft green field:
How little They, they and their doings seem,
Their herds and flocks about them, they themselves,
And all that they can further or obstruct!
Through utter weakness pitiably dear
As tender Infants are: and yet how great!
For all things serve them; them the Morning light
Loves as it glistens on the silent rocks,
And them the silent Rocks, which now from high
Look down upon them; the reposing Clouds,
The lurking Brooks from their invisible haunts,
And Old Helvellyn, conscious of the stir,
And the blue Sky that roofs their calm abode.

With deep devotion, Nature, did I feel
In that great City what I owed to thee,
High thoughts of God and Man, and love of Man,
Triumphant over all those loathsome sights
Of wretchedness and vice; a watchful eye,
Which with the outside of our human life
Not satisfied, must read the inner mind;
For I already had been taught to love
My Fellow-beings, to such habits train'd
Among the woods and mountains, where I found
In thee a gracious Guide, to lead me forth

Beyond the bosom of my Family,
 My Friends and youthful Playmates. 'Twas thy power
 That rais'd the first complacency in me,
 And noticeable kindness of heart,
 Love human to the Creature in himself
 As he appear'd, a stranger in my path,
 Before my eyes a Brother of this world;
 Thou first didst with those motions of delight
 Inspire me.—I remember, far from home
 Once having stray'd, while yet a very Child,
 I saw a sight, and with what joy and love!
 It was a day of exhalations, spread
 Upon the mountains, mists and steam-like fogs
 Redounding everywhere, not vehement,
 But calm and mild, gentle and beautiful,
 With gleams of sunshine on the eyelet spots
 And loop-holes of the hills, wherever seen,
 Hidden by quiet process, and as soon
 Unfolded, to be huddled up again:
 Along a narrow Valley and profound
 I journey'd, when, aloft above my head,
 Emerging from the silvery vapours, lo!
 A Shepherd and his Dog! in open day:
 Girt round with mists they stood and look'd about
 From that enclosure small, inhabitants
 Of an aerial Island floating on,
 As seem'd, with that Abode in which they were,
 A little pendant area of grey rocks,
 By the soft wind breath'd forward. With delight
 As bland almost, one Evening I beheld,
 And at as early age (the spectacle
 Is common, but by me was then first seen)
 A Shepherd in the bottom of a Vale
 Towards the centre standing, who with voice,
 And hand waved to and fro as need required
 Gave signal to his Dog, thus teaching him
 To chace along the mazes of steep crags
 The Flock he could not see: and so the Brute
 Dear Creature! with a Man's intelligence
 Advancing, or retreating on his steps,
 Through every pervious strait, to right or left,

THE PRELUDE

Thriddled away unbaffled; while the Flock
Fled upwards from the terror of his Bark
Through rocks and seams of turf with liquid gold
Irradiate, that deep farewell light by which
The setting sun proclaims the love he bears
To mountain regions.

Beauteous the domain
Where to the sense of beauty first my heart
Was open'd, tract more exquisitely fair
Than is the Paradise of ten thousand Trees,
Or Gehol's famous Gardens, in a Clime
Chosen from widest empire, for delight
Of the Tartarian Dynasty composed;
(Beyond that mighty Wall, not fabulous,
China's stupendous mound!) by patient skill
Of myriads, and boon Nature's lavish help;
Scene link'd to scene, an evergrowing change,
Soft, grand, or gay! with Palaces and Domes
Of Pleasure spangled over, shady Dells
For Eastern Monasteries, sunny Mounds
With Temples crested, Bridges, Gondolas,
Rocks, Dens, and Groves of foliage taught to melt
Into each other their obsequious hues
Going and gone again, in subtle chace,
Too fine to be pursued; or standing forth
In no discordant opposition, strong
And gorgeous as the colours side by side,
Bedded among rich plumes of Tropic Birds;
And mountains over all embracing all;
And all the landscape endlessly enrich'd
With waters running, falling, or asleep.

But lovelier far than this the Paradise
Where I was rear'd; in Nature's primitive gifts
Favor'd no less, and more to every sense
Delicious, seeing that the sun and sky,
The elements and seasons in their change
Do find their dearest Fellow-labourer there,
The heart of Man, a district on all sides
The fragrance breathing of humanity,
Man free, man working for himself, with choice

Of time, and place, and object; by his wants,
 His comforts, native occupations, cares,
 Conducted on to individual ends
 Or social, and still followed by a train
 Unwoo'd, unthought-of even, simplicity,
 And beauty, and inevitable grace.

Yea, doubtless, at an age when but a glimpse
 Of those resplendent Gardens, with their frame
 Imperial, and elaborate ornaments,
 Would to a child be transport over-great,
 When but a half-hour's roam through such a place
 Would leave behind a dance of images
 That shall break in upon his sleep for weeks;
 Even then the common haunts of the green earth,
 With the ordinary human interests
 Which they embosom, all without regard
 As both may seem, are fastening on the heart
 Insensibly, each with the other's help,
 So that we love, not knowing that we love,
 And feel, not knowing whence our feeling comes.

Such league have these two principles of joy
 In our affections. I have singled out
 Some moments, the earliest that I could, in which
 Their several currents blended into one,
 Weak yet, and gathering imperceptibly,
 Flow'd in by gushes. My first human love,
 As hath been mention'd, did incline to those
 Whose occupations and concerns were most
 Illustrated by Nature and adorn'd,
 And Shepherds were the men who pleas'd me first.
 Not such as in Arcadian Fastnesses
 Sequester'd, handed down among themselves,
 So ancient Poets sing, the golden Age;
 Nor such, a second Race, allied to these,
 As Shakespeare in the Wood of Arden plac'd
 Where Phoebe sigh'd for the false Ganymede,
 Or there where Florizel and Perdita
 Together danc'd, Queen of the Feast and King;
 Nor such as Spenser fabled. True it is,

That I had heard (what he perhaps had seen)
 Of maids at sunrise bringing in from far
 Their May-bush, and along the Streets, in flocks,
 Parading with a Song of taunting Rhymes,
 Aim'd at the Laggards slumbering within doors;
 Had also heard, from those who yet remember'd,
 Tales of the May-pole Dance, and flowers that deck'd
 The Posts and the Kirk-pillars, and of Youths,
 That each one with his Maid, at break of day,
 By annual custom issued forth in troops,
 To drink the waters of some favorite well,
 And hang it round with Garlands. This, alas!
 Was but a dream; the times had scatter'd all
 These lighter graces, and the rural custom
 And manners which it was my chance to see
 In childhood were severe and unadorn'd,
 The unluxuriant produce of a life
 Intent on little but substantial needs,
 Yet beautiful, and beauty that was felt.
 But images of danger and distress,
 And suffering among awful Powers, and Forms;
 Of this I heard and saw enough to make
 The imagination restless; nor was free
 Myself from frequent perils; nor were tales
 Wanting, the tragedies of former times,
 Or hazards and escapes, which in my walks
 I carried with me among crags and woods
 And mountains; and of these may here be told
 One, as recorded by my Household Dame.

At the first falling of autumnal snow
 A Shepherd and his Son one day went forth
 (Thus did the Matron's Tale begin) to seek
 A Straggler of their Flock. They both had rang'd
 Upon this service the preceding day
 All over their own pastures and beyond,
 And now, at sun-rise sallying out again
 Renew'd their search begun where from Dove Crag,
 Ill home for bird so gentle, they look'd down
 On Deep-dale Head, and Brothers-water, named
 From those two Brothers that were drown'd therein.

Thence, northward, having pass'd by Arthur's Seat,
 To Fairfield's highest summit; on the right
 Leaving St. Sunday's Pike, to Grisedale Tarn
 They shot, and over that cloud-loving Hill,
 Seat Sandal, a fond lover of the clouds;
 Thence up Helvellyn, a superior Mount
 With prospect underneath of Striding-Edge,
 And Grisedale's houseless Vale, along the brink
 Of Russet Cove, and those two other Coves,
 Huge skeletons of crags, which from the trunk
 Of old Helvellyn spread their arms abroad,
 And make a stormy harbour for the winds.
 Far went those Shepherds in their devious quest,
 From mountain ridges peeping as they pass'd
 Down into every Glen: at length the Boy
 Said, "Father, with your leave I will go back,
 And range the ground which we have search'd before."
 So speaking, southward down the hill the Lad
 Sprang like a gust of wind, crying aloud
 "I know where I shall find him." "For take note,
 Said here my grey-hair'd Dame, that tho' the storm
 Drive one of these poor Creatures miles and miles,
 If he can crawl he will return again
 To his own hills, the spots where, when a Lamb,
 He learn'd to pasture at his Mother's side."
 After so long a labour, suddenly
 Bethinking him of this, the Boy
 Pursued his way towards a brook whose course
 Was through that unfenced tract of mountain-ground
 Which to his Father's little Farm belong'd,
 The home and ancient Birth-right of their Flock.
 Down the deep channel of the Stream he went,
 Prying through every nook; meanwhile the rain
 Began to fall upon the mountain tops,
 Thick storm and heavy which for three hours' space
 Abated not; and all that time the Boy
 Was busy in his search until at length
 He spied the Sheep upon a plot of grass,
 An Island in the Brook. It was a place
 Remote and deep, piled round with rocks where foot
 Of man or beast was seldom used to tread;

THE PRELUDE

But now, when everywhere the summer grass
Had fail'd, this one Adventurer, hunger-press'd,
Had left his Fellows, and made his way alone
To the green plot of pasture in the Brook.
Before the Boy knew well what he had seen
He leapt upon the Island with proud heart
And with a Prophet's joy. Immediately
The Sheep sprang forward to the further Shore
And was borne headlong by the roaring flood.
At this the Boy look'd round him, and his heart
Fainted with fear; thrice did he turn his face
To either brink; nor could he summon up
The courage that was needful to leap back
Cross the tempestuous torrent; so he stood,
A Prisoner on the Island, not without
More than one thought of death and his last hour.
Meanwhile the Father had return'd alone
To his own house; and now at the approach
Of evening he went forth to meet his Son,
Conjecturing vainly for what cause the Boy
Had stay'd so long. The Shepherd took his way
Up his own mountain grounds, where, as he walk'd
Along the Steep that overhung the Brook,
He seem'd to hear a voice, which was again
Repeated, like the whistling of a kite.
At this, not knowing why, as oftentimes
Long afterwards he has been heard to say,
Down to the Brook he went, and track'd its course
Upwards among the o'erhanging rocks; nor thus
Had he gone far, ere he espied the Boy
Where on that little plot of ground he stood
Right in the middle of the roaring Stream,
Now stronger every moment and more fierce.
The sight was such as no one could have seen
Without distress and fear. The Shepherd heard
The outcry of his Son, he stretch'd his Staff
Towards him, bade him leap, which word scarce said
The Boy was safe within his Father's arms.

Smooth life and Flock and Shepherd in old time,
Long Springs and tepid Winters on the Banks

Of delicate Galesus; and no less
 Those scatter'd along Adria's myrtle Shores:
 Smooth life the herdsman and his snow-white Herd
 To Triumphs and to sacrificial Rites
 Devoted, on the inviolable Stream
 Of rich Clitumnus; and the Goat-herd liv'd
 As sweetly, underneath the pleasant brows
 Of cool Lucretilis, where the Pipe was heard
 Of Pan, the invisible God, thrilling the rocks
 With tutelary music, from all harm
 The Fold protecting. I myself, mature
 In manhood then, have seen a pastoral Tract
 Like one of these, where Fancy might run wild,
 Though under skies less generous and serene;
 Yet there, as for herself, had Nature fram'd
 A Pleasure-ground, diffused a fair expanse
 Of level Pasture, islanded with Groves
 And bank'd with woody Risings; but the Plain
 Endless; here opening widely out, and there
 Shut up in lesser lakes or beds of lawn
 And intricate recesses, creek or bay
 Shelter'd within a shelter, where at large
 The Shepherd strays, a rolling hut his home:
 Thither he comes with spring-time, there abides
 All summer, and at sunrise ye may hear
 His flute or flagelet resounding far;
 There's not a Nook or Hold of that vast space,
 Nor Strait where passage is, but it shall have
 In turn its Visitant, telling there his hours
 In unlaborious pleasure, with no task
 More toilsome than to carve a beechen bowl
 For Spring or Fountain, which the Traveller finds
 When through the region he pursues at will
 His devious course. A glimpse of such sweet life
 I saw when, from the melancholy Walls
 Of Goslar, once Imperial! I renew'd
 My daily walk along that chearful Plain,
 Which, reaching to her Gates, spreads East and West
 And Northwards, from beneath the mountainous verge
 Of the Hercynian forest. Yet hail to You,
 Your rocks and precipices, Ye that seize

THE PRELUDE

The heart with firmer grasp! your snows and streams
Ungovernable, and your terrifying winds,
That howl'd so dismally when I have been
Companionless, among your solitudes.
There 'tis the Shepherd's task the winter long
To wait upon the storms: of their approach
Sagacious, from the height he drives his Flock
Down into sheltering coves, and feeds them there
Through the hard time, long as the storm is lock'd,
(So do they phrase it) bearing from the stalls
A toilsome burden up the craggy ways,
To strew it on the snow. And when the Spring
Looks out, and all the mountains dance with lambs,
He through the enclosures won from the steep Waste,
And through the lower Heights hath gone his rounds;
And when the Flock with warmer weather climbs
Higher and higher, him his office leads
To range among them, through the hills dispers'd,
And watch their goings, whatsoever track
Each Wanderer chuses for itself; a work
That lasts the summer through. He quits his home
At day-spring, and no sooner doth the sun
Begin to strike him with a fire-like heat
Than he lies down upon some shining place
And breakfasts with his Dog; when he hath stay'd,
As for the most he doth, beyond his time,
He springs up with a bound, and then away!
Ascending fast with his long Pole in hand,
Or winding in and out among the crags.
What need to follow him through what he does
Or sees in his day's march? He feels himself
In those vast regions where his service is
A Freeman; wedded to his life of hope
And hazard, and hard labour interchang'd
With that majestic indolence so dear
To native Man. A rambling Schoolboy, thus
Have I beheld him, without knowing why
Have felt his presence in his own domain,
As of a Lord and Master; or a Power
Or Genius, under Nature, under God,
Presiding; and severest solitude

Seem'd more commanding oft when he was there.
 Seeking the raven's nest, and suddenly
 Surpriz'd with vapours, or on rainy days
 When I have angled up the lonely brooks
 Mine eyes have glanced upon him, few steps off,
 In size a giant, stalking through the fog,
 His Sheep like Greenland Bears; at other times
 When round some shady promontory turning,
 His Form hath flash'd upon me, glorified
 By the deep radiance of the setting sun:
 Or him have I descried in distant sky,
 A solitary object and sublime,
 Above all height! like an aerial Cross,
 As it is stationed on some spiry Rock
 Of the Chartreuse, for worship. Thus was Man
 Ennobled outwardly before mine eyes,
 And thus my heart at first was introduc'd
 To an unconscious love and reverence
 Of human Nature; hence the human form
 To me was like an index of delight,
 Of grace and honour, power and worthiness.
 Meanwhile, this Creature, spiritual almost
 As those of Books; but more exalted far,
 Far more of an imaginative form,
 Was not a Corin of the groves, who lives
 For his own fancies, or to dance by the hour
 In coronal, with Phillis in the midst,
 But, for the purposes of kind, a Man
 With the most common; Husband, Father; learn'd,
 Could teach, admonish, suffer'd with the rest
 From vice and folly, wretchedness and fear;
 Of this I little saw, car'd less for it,
 But something must have felt.

Call ye these appearances

Which I beheld of Shepherds in my youth,
 This sanctity of Nature given to Man
 A shadow, a delusion, ye who are fed
 By the dead letter, miss the spirit of things,
 Whose truth is not a motion or a shape
 Instinct with vital functions, but a block
 Or waxen Image which yourselves have made,

THE PRELUDE

And ye adore. But blessed be the God
Of Nature and of Man that this was so,
That Men did at the first present themselves
Before my untaught eyes thus purified,
Remov'd, and at a distance that was fit.
And so we all of us in some degree
Are led to knowledge, whencesoever led,
And howsoever; were it otherwise,
And we found evil fast as we find good
In our first years, or think that it is found,
How could the innocent heart bear up and live!
But doubly fortunate my lot; not here
Alone, that something of a better life
Perhaps was round me than it is the privilege
Of most to move in, but that first I look'd
At Man through objects that were great or fair,
First commun'd with him by their help. And thus
Was founded a sure safeguard and defence
Against the weight of meanness, selfish cares,
Coarse manners, vulgar passions, that beat in
On all sides from the ordinary world
In which we traffic. Starting from this point,
I had my face towards the truth, began
With an advantage; furnish'd with that kind
Of prepossession without which the soul
Receives no knowledge that can bring forth good,
No genuine insight ever comes to her:
Happy in this, that I with nature walk'd,
Not having a too early intercourse
With the deformities of crowded life,
And those ensuing laughters and contempts
Self-pleasing, which if we would wish to think
With admiration and respect of man
Will not permit us; but pursue the mind
That to devotion willingly would be rais'd
Into the Temple and the Temple's heart.

Yet do not deem, my Friend, though thus I speak
Of Man as having taken in my mind
A place thus early which might almost seem
Pre-eminent, that it was really so.

Nature herself was at this unripe time,
 But secondary to my own pursuits
 And animal activities, and all
 Their trivial pleasures; and long afterwards
 When these had died away, and Nature did
 For her own sake become my joy, even then
 And upwards through late youth, until not less
 Than three and twenty summers had been told
 Was man in my affections and regards
 Subordinate to her; her awful forms
 And viewless agencies: a passion, she!
 A rapture often, and immediate joy,
 Ever at hand; he distant, but a grace
 Occasional, an accidental thought,
 His hour being not yet come. Far less had then
 The inferior Creatures, beast or bird, attun'd
 My spirit to that gentleness of love,
 Won from me those minute obeisances
 Of tenderness, which I may number now
 With my first blessings. Nevertheless, on these
 The light of beauty did not fall in vain,
 Or grandeur circumfuse them to no end.

Why should I speak of Tillers of the soil?
 The Ploughman and his Team; or Men and Boys
 In festive summer busy with the rake,
 Old Men and ruddy Maids, and Little Ones
 All out together, and in sun and shade
 Dispers'd among the hay-grounds alder-fringed,
 The Quarry-man, far heard! that blasts the rock,
 The Fishermen in pairs, the one to row,
 And one to drop the Net, plying their trade
 "'Mid tossing lakes and tumbling boats" and winds
 Whistling; the Miner, melancholy Man!
 That works by taper light, while all the hills
 Are shining with the glory of the day.

But when that first poetic Faculty
 Of plain imagination and severe,
 No longer a mute Influence of the soul,
 An Element of Nature's inner self,

THE PRELUDE

Began to have some promptings to put on
A visible shape, and to the works of art,
The notions and the images of books
Did knowingly conform itself, by these
Enflamed, and proud of that her new delight,
There came among those shapes of human life
A wilfulness of fancy and conceit
Which gave them new importance to the mind;
And Nature and her objects beautified
These fictions, as in some sort in their turn
They burnish'd her. From touch of this new power
Nothing was safe: the Elder-tree that grew
Beside the well-known Charnel-house had then
A dismal look; the Yew-tree had its Ghost,
That took its station there for ornament:
Then common death was none, common mishap,
But matter for this humour everywhere,
The tragic super-tragic, else left short.
Then, if a Widow, staggering with the blow
Of her distress, was known to have made her way
To the cold grave in which her Husband slept,
One night, or haply more than one, through pain
Or half-insensate impotence of mind
The fact was caught at greedily, and there
She was a visitant the whole year through,
Wetting the turf with never-ending tears,
And all the storms of Heaven must beat on her.

Through wild obliquities could I pursue
Among all objects of the fields and groves
These cravings; when the Foxglove, one by one,
Upwards through every stage of its tall stem,
Had shed its bells, and stood by the wayside
Dismantled, with a single one, perhaps,
Left at the ladder's top, with which the Plant
Appeared to stoop, as slender blades of grass
Tipp'd with a bead of rain or dew, behold!
If such a sight were seen, would Fancy bring
Some Vagrant thither with her Babes, and seat her
Upon the turf beneath the stately Flower
Drooping in sympathy, and making so

A melancholy Crest above the head
 Of the lorn Creature, while her Little-Ones,
 All unconcerned with her unhappy plight,
 Were sporting with the purple cups that lay
 Scatter'd upon the ground.

There was a Copse

An upright bank of wood and woody rock
 That opposite our rural Dwelling stood,
 In which a sparkling patch of diamond light
 Was in bright weather duly to be seen
 On summer afternoons, within the wood
 At the same place. 'Twas doubtless nothing more
 Than a black rock, which, wet with constant springs
 Glister'd far seen from out its lurking-place
 As soon as ever the declining sun
 Had smitten it. Beside our Cottage hearth,
 Sitting with open door, a hundred times
 Upon this lustre have I gaz'd, that seem'd
 To have some meaning which I could not find;
 And now it was a burnish'd shield, I fancied,
 Suspended over a Knight's Tomb, who lay
 Inglorious, buried in the dusky wood;
 An entrance now into some magic cave
 Or Palace for a Fairy of the rock;
 Nor would I, though not certain whence the cause
 Of the effulgence, thither have repair'd
 Without a precious bribe, and day by day
 And month by month I saw the spectacle,
 Nor ever once have visited the spot
 Unto this hour. Thus sometimes were the shapes
 Of wilful fancy grafted upon feelings
 Of the imagination, and they rose
 In worth accordingly. My present Theme
 Is to retrace the way that led me on
 Through Nature to the love of Human Kind;
 Nor could I with such object overlook
 The Influence of this Power which turn'd itself
 Instinctively to human passions, things
 Least understood; of this adulterate Power,
 For so it may be call'd, and without wrong,
 When with that first compar'd. Yet in the midst

THE PRELUDE

Of these vagaries, with an eye so rich
As mine was, through the chance, on me not wasted
Of having been brought up in such a grand
And lovely region, I had forms distinct
To steady me; these thoughts did oft revolve
About some centre palpable, which at once
Incited them to motion, and control'd,
And whatsoever shape the fit may take,
And whencesoever it might come, I still
At all times had a real solid world
Of images about me; did not pine
As one in cities bred might do; as Thou,
Beloved Friend! hast told me that thou didst,
Great Spirit as thou art, in endless dreams
Of sickliness, disjoining, joining things
Without the light of knowledge. Where the harm,
If, when the Woodman languish'd with disease
From sleeping night by night among the woods
Within his sod-built Cabin, Indian-wise,
I call'd the pangs of disappointed love
And all the long Etcetera of such thought
To help him to his grave? Meanwhile the Man,
If not already from the woods retir'd
To die at home, was haply, as I knew,
Pining alone among the gentle airs,
Birds, running Streams, and Hills so beautiful
On golden evenings, while the charcoal Pile
Breath'd up its smoke, an image of his ghost
Or spirit that full soon must take its flight.

There came a time of greater dignity
Which had been gradually prepar'd, and now
Rush'd in as if on wings, the time in which
The pulse of Being everywhere was felt,
When all the several frames of things, like stars
Through every magnitude distinguishable,
Were half confounded in each other's blaze,
One galaxy of life and joy. Then rose
Man, inwardly contemplated, and present
In my own being, to a loftier height;
As of all visible natures crown; and first

In capability of feeling what
 Was to be felt; in being rapt away
 By the divine effect of power and love,
 As, more than anything we know instinct
 With Godhead, and by reason and by will
 Acknowledging dependency sublime.

Erelong transported hence as in a dream
 I found myself begirt with temporal shapes
 Of vice and folly thrust upon my view,
 Objects of sport, and ridicule, and scorn,
 Manners and characters discriminate,
 And little busy passions that eclips'd,
 As well they might, the impersonated thought,
 The idea or abstraction of the Kind.
 An Idler among academic Bowers,
 Such was my new condition, as at large
 Has been set forth; yet here the vulgar light
 Of present actual superficial life,
 Gleaming through colouring of other times,
 Old usages and local privilege,
 Thereby was soften'd, almost solemnized,
 And render'd apt and pleasing to the view;
 This notwithstanding, being brought more near
 As I was now, to guilt and wretchedness,
 I trembled, thought of human life at times
 With an indefinite terror and dismay
 Such as the storms and angry elements
 Had bred in me, but gloomier far, a dim
 Analogy to uproar and misrule,
 Disquiet, danger, and obscurity.

It might be told (but wherefore speak of things
 Common to all?) that seeing, I essay'd
 To give relief, began to deem myself
 A moral agent, judging between good
 And evil, not as for the mind's delight
 But for her safety, one who was to *act*,
 As sometimes, to the best of my weak means,
 I did, by human sympathy impell'd;
 And through dislike and most offensive pain

THE PRELUDE

Was to the truth conducted; of this faith
Never forsaken, that by acting well
And understanding, I should learn to love
The end of life and every thing we know.

Preceptress stern, that did instruct me next,
London! to thee I willing return.
Erewhile my Verse play'd only with the flowers
Enwrought upon thy mantle; satisfied
With this amusement, and a simple look
Of child-like inquisition, now and then
Cast upwards on thine eye to puzzle out
Some inner meanings, which might harbour there.
Yet did I not give way to this light mood
Wholly beguiled, as one incapable
Of higher things, and ignorant that high things
Were round me. Never shall I forget the hour
The moment rather say when having thridded
The labyrinth of suburban Villages,
At length I did unto myself first seem
To enter the great City. On the roof
Of an itinerant Vehicle I sate
With vulgar Men about me, vulgar forms
Of houses, pavement, streets, of men and things,
Mean shapes on every side: but, at the time,
When to myself it fairly might be said,
The very moment that I seem'd to know
The threshold now is overpass'd, Great God!
That aught *external* to the living mind
Should have such mighty sway! yet so it was
A weight of Ages did at once descend
Upon my heart; no thought embodied, no
Distinct remembrances; but weight and power,
Power growing with the weight: alas! I feel
That I am trifling: 'twas a moment's pause.
All that took place within me, came and went
As in a moment, and I only now
Remember that it was a thing divine.

As when a Traveller hath from open day
With torches pass'd into some Vault of Earth,

The Grotto of Antiparos, or the Den
 Of Yordas among Craven's mountain tracts;
 He looks and sees the cavern spread and grow,
 Widening itself on all sides, sees, or thinks
 He sees, erelong, the roof above his head,
 Which instantly unsettles and recedes
 Substance and shadow, light and darkness, all
 Commingled, making up a Canopy
 Of Shapes and Forms and Tendencies to Shape
 That shift and vanish, change and interchange
 Like Spectres, ferment quiet and sublime;
 Which, after a short space, works less and less,
 Till every effort, every motion gone,
 The scene before him lies in perfect view,
 Exposed and lifeless, as a written book.
 But let him pause awhile, and look again
 And a new quickening shall succeed, at first
 Beginning timidly, then creeping fast
 Through all which he beholds; the senseless mass,
 In its projections, wrinkles, cavities,
 Through all its surface, with all colours streaming,
 Like a magician's airy pageant, parts
 Unites, embodying everywhere some pressure
 Or image, recognis'd or new, some type
 Or picture of the world; forests and lakes,
 Ships, Rivers, Towers, the Warrior clad in Mail,
 The prancing Steed, the Pilgrim with his Staff,
 The mitred Bishop and the throned King,
 A Spectacle to which there is no end.

No otherwise had I at first been moved
 With such a swell of feeling, follow'd soon
 By a blank sense of greatness pass'd away
 And afterwards continu'd to be mov'd
 In presence of that vast Metropolis,
 The Fountain of my Country's destiny
 And of the destiny of Earth itself,
 That great Emporium, Chronicle at once
 And Burial-place of passions and their home
 Imperial, and chief living residence.

THE PRELUDE

With strong Sensations, teeming as it did
Of past and present, such a place must needs
Have pleas'd me, in those times; I sought not then
Knowledge; but craved for power, and power I found
In all things; nothing had a circumscribed
And narrow influence; but all objects, being
Themselves capacious, also found in me
Capaciousness and amplitude of mind;
Such is the strength and glory of our Youth.
The Human nature unto which I felt
That I belong'd, and which I lov'd and reverenc'd,
Was not a punctual Presence, but a Spirit
Living in time and space, and far diffus'd.
In this my joy, in this my dignity
Consisted; the external universe,
By striking upon what is found within,
Had given me this conception, with the help
Of Books, and what they picture and record.

'Tis true the History of my native Land,
With those of Greece compar'd and popular Rome,
Events not lovely nor magnanimous,
But harsh and unaffecting in themselves
And in our high-wrought modern narratives
Stript of this harmonising soul, the life
Of manners and familiar incidents,
Had never much delighted me. And less
Than other minds I had been used to owe
The pleasure which I found in place or thing
To extrinsic transitory accidents,
Of record or tradition; but a sense
Of what had been here done, and suffer'd here
Through ages, and was doing, suffering, still
Weigh'd with me, could support the test of thought,
Was like the enduring majesty and power
Of independent nature; and not seldom
Even individual remembrances,
By working on the Shapes before my eyes,
Became like vital functions of the soul;
And out of what had been, what was, the place
Was thronged with impregnations, like those wilds

In which my early feelings had been nurs'd,
 And naked valleys, full of caverns, rocks,
 And audible seclusions, dashing lakes,
 Echoes and Waterfalls, and pointed crags
 That into music touch the passing wind.

Thus here imagination also found
 An element that pleas'd her, tried her strength,
 Among new objects simplified, arranged,
 Impregnated my knowledge, made it live,
 And the result was elevating thoughts
 Of human Nature. Neither guilt nor vice,
 Debasement of the body or the mind,
 Nor all the misery forced upon my sight,
 Which was not lightly passed, but often scann'd
 Most feelingly, could overthrow my trust
 In what we may become, induce belief
 That I was ignorant, had been falsely taught,
 A Solitary, who with vain conceits
 Had been inspired, and walk'd about in dreams.
 When from that awful prospect overcast
 And in eclipse, my meditations turn'd,
 Lo! everything that was indeed divine
 Retain'd its purity inviolate
 And unencroach'd upon, nay, seem'd brighter far
 For this deep shade in counterview, that gloom
 Of opposition, such as shew'd itself
 To the eyes of Adam, yet in Paradise,
 Though fallen from bliss, when in the East he saw
 Darkness ere day's mid course, and morning light
 More orient in the western cloud, that drew
 "O'er the blue firmament a radiant white,
 Descending slow with something heavenly fraught."

Add also, that among the multitudes
 Of that great City, oftentimes was seen
 Affectingly set forth, more than elsewhere
 Is possible, the unity of man,
 One spirit over ignorance and vice
 Predominant, in good and evil hearts
 One sense for moral judgements, as one eye

For the sun's light. When strongly breath'd upon
 By this sensation, whencesoe'er it comes
 Of union or communion doth the soul
 Rejoice as in her highest joy: for there,
 There chiefly, hath she feeling whence she is,
 And, passing through all Nature rests with God.

And is not, too, that vast Abiding-place
 Of human Creatures, turn where'er we may,
 Profusely sown with individual sights
 Of courage, and integrity, and truth,
 And tenderness, which, here set off by foil,
 Appears more touching. In the tender scenes
 Chiefly was my delight, and one of these
 Never will be forgotten. 'Twas a Man,
 Whom I saw sitting in an open Square
 Close to an iron paling that fenced in
 The spacious Grass-plot; on the corner stone
 Of the low wall in which the pales were fix'd
 Sate this One Man, and with a sickly babe
 Upon his knee, whom he had thither brought
 For sunshine, and to breathe the fresher air.
 Of those who pass'd, and me who look'd at him,
 He took no note; but in his brawny Arms
 (The Artificer was to the elbow bare,
 And from his work this moment had been stolen)
 He held the Child, and, bending over it,
 As if he were afraid both of the sun
 And of the air which he had come to seek,
 He eyed it with unutterable love.

Thus from a very early age, O Friend!
 My thought had been attracted more and more
 By slow gradations towards human kind
 And to the good and ill of human life;
 Nature had led me on, and now I seem'd
 To travel independent of her help,
 As if I had forgotten her; but no,
 My Fellow beings still were unto me
 Far less than she was, though the scale of love
 Were filling fast, 'twas light, as yet, compared
 With that in which her mighty objects lay.

BOOK NINTH

Residence in France

As oftentimes a River, it might seem,
 Yielding in part to old remembrances,
 Part sway'd by fear to tread an onward road
 That leads direct to the devouring sea
 Turns, and will measure back his course, far back,
 Towards the very regions which he cross'd
 In his first outset; so have we long time
 Made motions retrograde, in like pursuit
 Detain'd. But now we start afresh; I feel
 An impulse to precipitate my Verse.
 Fair greetings to this shapeless eagerness,
 Whene'er it comes, needful in work so long,
 Thrice needful to the argument which now
 Awaits us; Oh! how much unlike the past!
 One which though bright the promise, will be found
 Ere far we shall advance, ungenial, hard
 To treat of, and forbidding in itself.

Free as a colt at pasture on the hill,
 I ranged at large, through the Metropolis
 Month after month. Obscurely did I live,
 Not courting the society of Men
 By literature, or elegance, or rank
 Distinguish'd; in the midst of things, it seem'd,
 Looking as from a distance on the world
 That mov'd about me; yet insensibly
 False preconceptions were corrected thus
 And errors of the fancy rectified,
 Alike with reference to men and things,
 And sometimes from each quarter were pour'd in
 Novel imaginations and profound.
 A year thus spent, this field (with small regret
 Save only for the Book-stalls in the streets,
 Wild produce, hedge-row fruit, on all sides hung
 To tempt the sauntering traveller from his track)
 I quitted, and betook myself to France,

THE PRELUDE

Led thither chiefly by a personal wish
To speak the language more familiarly,
With which intent I chose for my abode
A City on the Borders of the Loire.

Through Paris lay my readiest path, and there
I sojourn'd a few days, and visited
In haste each spot of old and recent fame
The latter chiefly, from the field of Mars
Down to the suburbs of St. Anthony,
And from Mont Martyr southward, to the Dome
Of Geneviève. In both her clamorous Halls,
The National Synod and the Jacobins
I saw the revolutionary Power
Toss like a Ship at anchor, rock'd by storms;
The Arcades I traversed in the Palace huge
Of Orleans, coasted round and round the line
Of Tavern, Brothel, Gaming-house, and Shop,
Great rendezvous of worst and best, the walk
Of all who had a purpose, or had not;
I star'd and listen'd with a stranger's ears
To Hawkers and Haranguers, hubbub wild!
And hissing Factionists with ardent eyes,
In knots, or pairs, or single, ant-like swarms
Of Builders and Subverters, every face
That hope or apprehension could put on,
Joy, anger, and vexation in the midst
Of gaiety and dissolute idleness.

Where silent zephyrs sported with the dust
Of the Bastille, I sate in the open sun,
And from the rubbish gather'd up a stone
And pocketed the relick in the guise
Of an enthusiast, yet, in honest truth
Though not without some strong incumbencies;
And glad, (could living man be otherwise)
I look'd for something that I could not find,
Affecting more emotion than I felt,
For 'tis most certain that the utmost force
Of all these various objects which may shew
The temper of my mind as then it was

Seem'd less to recompense the Traveller's pains,
 Less mov'd me, gave me less delight than did,
 Among other sights, the Magdalene of le Brun,
 A Beauty exquisitely wrought, fair face
 And rueful, with its ever-flowing tears.

But hence to my more permanent residence
 I hasten; there, by novelties in speech,
 Domestic manners, customs, gestures, looks,
 And all the attire of ordinary life,
 Attention was at first engross'd; and thus,
 Amused and satisfied, I scarcely felt
 The shock of these concussions, unconcerned,
 Tranquil, almost, and careless as a flower
 Glassed in a Green-house, or a Parlour shrub
 While every bush and tree, the country through,
 Is shaking to the roots; indifference this
 Which may seem strange; but I was unprepared
 With needful knowledge, had abruptly pass'd
 Into a theatre, of which the stage
 Was busy with an action far advanced.
 Like others I had read, and eagerly
 Sometimes, the master Pamphlets of the day;
 Nor wanted such half-insight as grew wild
 Upon that meagre soil, help'd out by Talk
 And public News; but having never chanced
 To see a regular Chronicle which might shew,
 (If any such indeed existed then)
 Whence the main Organs of the public Power
 Had sprung, their transmigrations when and how
 Accomplish'd, giving thus unto events
 A form and body, all things were to me
 Loose and disjointed, and the affections left
 Without a vital interest. At that time,
 Moreover, the first storm was overblown,
 And the strong hand of outward violence
 Lock'd up in quiet. For myself, I fear
 Now in connection with so great a Theme
 To speak (as I must be compell'd to do)
 Of one so unimportant; a short time
 I loiter'd, and frequented night by night

Routs, card-tables, the formal haunts of Men,
 Whom in the City privilege of birth
 Sequester'd from the rest, societies
 Where, through punctilios of elegance
 And deeper causes, all discourse, alike
 Of good and evil of the time, was shunn'd
 With studious care; but 'twas not long ere this
 Proved tedious, and I gradually withdrew
 Into a noisier world; and thus did soon
 Become a Patriot, and my heart was all
 Given to the People, and my love was theirs.

A knot of military Officers,
 That to a Regiment appertain'd which then
 Was station'd in the City, were the chief
 Of my associates: some of these wore Swords
 Which had been seasoned in the Wars, and all
 Were men well-born, at least laid claim to such
 Distinction, as the Chivalry of France.
 In age and temper differing, they had yet
 One spirit ruling in them all, alike
 (Save only one, hereafter to be nam'd)
 Were bent upon undoing what was done:
 This was their rest, and only hope, therewith
 No fear had they of bad becoming worse,
 For worst to them was come, nor would have stirr'd,
 Or deem'd it worth a moment's while to stir,
 In anything, save only as the act
 Look'd thitherward. One, reckoning by years,
 Was in the prime of manhood, and erewhile
 He had sate Lord in many tender hearts,
 Though heedless of such honours now, and chang'd:
 His temper was quite master'd by the times,
 And they had blighted him, had eat away
 The beauty of his person, doing wrong
 Alike to body and to mind: his port,
 Which once had been erect and open, now
 Was stooping and contracted, and a face,
 By nature lovely in itself, express'd
 As much as any that was ever seen,
 A ravage out of season, made by thoughts

Unhealthy and vexatious. At the hour,
 The most important of each day, in which
 The public News was read, the fever came,
 A punctual visitant, to shake this Man,
 Disarm'd his voice, and fann'd his yellow cheek
 Into a thousand colours; while he read,
 Or mused, his sword was haunted by his touch
 Continually, like an uneasy place
 In his own body. 'Twas in truth an hour
 Of universal ferment; mildest men
 Were agitated; and commotions, strife
 Of passion and opinion fill'd the walls
 Of peaceful houses with unquiet sounds.
 The soil of common life was at that time
 Too hot to tread upon; oft said I then,
 And not then only, "what a mockery this
 Of history, the past and that to come!
 Now do I feel how I have been deceived,
 Reading of Nations and their works, in faith,
 Faith given to vanity and emptiness;
 Oh! laughter for the Page that would reflect
 To future times the face of what now is!"
 The land all swarm'd with passion, like a Plain
 Devour'd by locuts, Carra, Gorsas, add
 A hundred other names, forgotten now,
 Nor to be heard of more, yet were they Powers,
 Like earthquakes, shocks repeated day by day,
 And felt through every nook of town and field.

The Men already spoken of as chief
 Of my Associates were prepared for flight
 To augment the band of Emigrants in Arms
 Upon the borders of the Rhine, and leagued
 With foreign Foes mustered for instant war.
 This was their undisguis'd intent, and they
 Were waiting with the whole of their desires
 The moment to depart.

An Englishman,
 Born in a Land, the name of which appear'd
 To license some unruliness of mind,
 A Stranger, with Youth's further privilege,

THE PRELUDE

And that indulgence which a half-learn'd speech
Wins from the courteous, I who had been else
Shunn'd and not tolerated freely lived
With these Defenders of the Crown, and talk'd
And heard their notions, nor did they disdain
The wish to bring me over to their cause.

But though untaught by thinking or by books
To reason well of polity or law
And nice distinctions, then on every tongue,
Of natural rights and civil, and to acts
Of Nations, and their passing interests,
(I speak comparing these with other things)
Almost indifferent, even the Historian's Tale
Prizing but little otherwise than I priz'd
Tales of the Poets, as it made my heart
Beat high and fill'd my fancy with fair forms,
Old Heroes and their sufferings and their deeds;
Yet in the regal Sceptre, and the pomp
Of Orders and Degrees, I nothing found -
Then, or had ever, even in crudest youth,
That dazzled me; but rather what my soul
Mourn'd for, or loath'd, beholding that the best
Rul'd not, and feeling that they ought to rule.

For, born in a poor District, and which yet
Retaineth more of ancient homeliness,
Manners erect, and frank simplicity,
Than any other nook of English Land,
It was my fortune scarcely to have seen
Through the whole tenor of my School-day time
The face of one, who, whether Boy or Man,
Was vested with attention or respect
Through claims of wealth or blood; nor was it least
Of many debts which afterwards I owed
To Cambridge, and an academic life
That something there was holden up to view
Of a Republic, where all stood thus far
Upon equal ground, that they were brothers all
In honour, as in one community,
Scholars and Gentlemen, where, furthermore,

Distinction lay open to all that came,
 And wealth and titles were in less esteem
 Than talents and successful industry.
 Add unto this, subservience from the first
 To God and Nature's single sovereignty,
 Familiar presences of awful Power
 And fellowship with venerable books
 To sanction the proud workings of the soul,
 And mountain liberty. It could not be
 But that one tutor'd thus, who had been form'd
 To thought and moral feeling in the way
 This story hath described, should look with awe
 Upon the faculties of Man, receive
 Gladly the highest promises, and hail
 As best the government of equal rights
 And individual worth. And hence, O Friend!
 If at the first great outbreak I rejoiced
 Less than might well befit my youth, the cause
 In part lay here, that unto me the events
 Seemed nothing out of nature's certain course,
 A gift that rather was come late than soon.
 No wonder, then, if advocates like these
 Whom I have mention'd, at this riper day
 Were impotent to make my hopes put on
 The shape of theirs, my understanding bend
 In honour to their honour, zeal which yet
 Had slumber'd, now in opposition burst
 Forth like a Polar Summer; every word
 They utter'd was a dart, by counter-winds
 Blown back upon themselves, their reason seem'd
 Confusion-stricken by a higher power
 Than human understanding, their discourse
 Maim'd, spiritless, and in their weakness strong
 I triumph'd.

Meantime, day by day, the roads
 (While I consorted with these Royalists)
 Were crowded with the bravest Youth of France,
 And all the promptest of her Spirits, link'd
 In gallant Soldiership, and posting on
 To meet the War upon her Frontier Bounds.
 Yet at this very moment do tears start

THE PRELUDE

Into mine eyes; I do not say I weep,
I wept not then, but tears have dimm'd my sight,
In memory of the farewells of that time,
Domestic severings, female fortitude
At dearest separation, patriot love
And self-devotion, and terrestrial hope
Encourag'd with a martyr's confidence;
Even files of Strangers merely, seen but once,
And for a moment, men from far with sound
Of music, martial tunes, and banners spread
Entering the city, here and there a face
Or person singled out among the rest,
Yet still a Stranger and belov'd as such,
Even by these passing spectacles my heart
Was oftentimes uplifted, and they seem'd
Arguments sent from Heaven, that 'twas a cause
Good, and which no one could stand up against
Who was not lost, abandon'd, selfish, proud,
Mean, miserable, wilfully deprav'd,
Hater perverse of equity and truth.

Among that band of Officers was one
Already hinted at, of other mold,
A Patriot, thence rejected by the rest
And with an oriental loathing spurn'd,
As of a different caste. A meeker Man
Than this liv'd never, or a more benign
Meek, though enthusiastic. Injuries
Made him more gracious, and his nature then
Did breathe its sweetness out most sensibly
As aromatic flowers on alpine turf
When foot hath crush'd them. He thro' the events
Of that great change wander'd in perfect faith,
As through a Book, an old Romance or Tale
Of Fairy, or some dream of actions wrought
Behind the summer clouds. By birth he rank'd
With the most noble, but unto the poor
Among mankind he was in service bound
As by some tie invisible, oaths profess'd
To a religious Order. Man he lov'd
As Man; and to the mean and the obscure

And all the homely in their homely works
 Transferr'd a courtesy which had no air
 Of condescension, but did rather seem
 A passion and a gallantry, like that
 Which he, a Soldier, in his idler day
 Had pay'd to Woman; somewhat vain he was,
 Or seem'd so, yet it was not vanity
 But fondness, and a kind of radiant joy
 That cover'd him about when he was bent
 On works of love or freedom, or revolved
 Complacently the progress of a cause,
 Whereof he was a part; yet this was meek
 And placid, and took nothing from the Man
 That was delightful: oft in solitude
 With him did I discourse about the end
 Of civil government, and its wisest forms,
 Of ancient prejudice, and chartered rights,
 Allegiance, faith, and law by time matured,
 Custom and habit, novelty and change,
 Of self-respect, and virtue in the Few
 For patrimonial honour set apart,
 And ignorance in the labouring Multitude.
 For he, an upright Man and tolerant,
 Balanced these contemplations in his mind
 And I, who at that time was scarcely dipp'd
 Into the turmoil, had a sounder judgment
 Than afterwards, carried about me yet
 With less alloy to its integrity
 The experience of past ages, as through help
 Of Books and common life it finds its way
 To youthful minds, by objects over near
 Not press'd upon, nor dazzled or misled
 By struggling with the crowd for present ends.

But though not deaf and obstinate to find
 Error without apology on the side
 Of those who were against us, more delight
 We took, and let this freely be confess'd,
 In painting to ourselves the miseries
 Of royal Courts, and that voluptuous life

THE PRELUDE

Unfeeling, where the Man who is of soul
The meanest thrives the most, where dignity,
True personal dignity, abideth not,
A light and cruel world, cut off from all
The natural inlets of just sentiment,
From lowly sympathy, and chastening truth,
Where good and evil never have that name,
That which they ought to have, but wrong prevails,
And vice at home. We added dearest themes,
Man and his noble nature, as it is
The gift of God and lies in his own power,
His blind desires and steady faculties
Capable of clear truth, the one to break
Bondage, the other to build Liberty
On firm foundations, making social life,
Through knowledge spreading and imperishable,
As just in regulation, and as pure
As individual in the wise and good.
We summon'd up the honorable deeds
Of ancient Story, thought of each bright spot
That could be found in all recorded time
Of truth preserv'd and error pass'd away,
Of single Spirits that catch the flame from Heaven,
And how the multitude of men will feed
And fan each other, thought of Sects, how keen
They are to put the appropriate nature on,
Triumphant over every obstacle
Of custom, language, Country, love and hate,
And what they do and suffer for their creed,
How far they travel, and how long endure,
How quickly mighty Nations have been form'd
From least beginnings, how, together lock'd
By new opinions, scatter'd tribes have made
One body spreading wide as clouds in heaven.
To aspirations then of our own minds
Did we appeal; and finally beheld
A living confirmation of the whole
Before us in a People risen up
Fresh as the morning Star: elate we look'd
Upon their virtues, saw in rudest men
Self-sacrifice the firmest, generous love

And continence of mind, and sense of right
Uppermost in the midst of fiercest strife.

Oh! sweet it is, in academic Groves,
Or such retirement, Friend! as we have known
Among the mountains, by our Rotha's Stream,
Greta or Derwent, or some nameless Rill,
To ruminate with interchange of talk
On rational liberty, and hope in Man,
Justice and peace; but far more sweet such toil,
Toil say I, for it leads to thoughts abstruse
If Nature then be standing on the brink
Of some great trial, and we hear the voice
Of One devoted, one whom circumstance
Hath call'd upon to embody his deep sense
In action, give it outwardly a shape
And that of benediction to the world;
Then doubt is not, and truth is more than truth,
A hope it is and a desire, a creed
Of zeal by an authority divine
Sanction'd of danger, difficulty or death.
Such conversation under Attic shades
Did Dion hold with Plato, ripen'd thus
For a Deliverer's glorious task, and such,
He, on that ministry already bound,
Held with Eudemus and Timonides,
Surrounded by Adventurers in Arms,
When those two Vessels with their daring Freight
For the Sicilian Tyrant's overthrow
Sail'd from Zacynthus, philosophic war
Led by Philosophers. With harder fate,
Though like ambition, such was he, O Friend!
Of whom I speak, so Beaupuis (let the Name
Stand near the worthiest of Antiquity)
Fashion'd his life, and many a long discourse
With like persuasion honor'd we maintain'd,
He on his part accoutred for the worst.
He perish'd fighting in supreme command
Upon the Borders of the unhappy Loire
For Liberty against deluded Men,
His Fellow-countrymen, and yet most bless'd

THE PRELUDE

In this, that he the fate of later times
Lived not to see, nor what we now behold
Who have as ardent hearts as he had then.

Along that very Loire, with Festivals
Resounding at all hours, and innocent yet
Of civil slaughter was our frequent walk
Or in wide Forests of the neighbourhood,
High woods and over-arch'd with open space
On every side, and footing many a mile,
In woven roots and moss smooth as the sea,
A solemn region. Often in such place
From earnest dialogues I slipp'd in thought
And let remembrance steal to other times
When Hermits from their sheds and caves forth stray'd,
Walk'd by themselves, so met in shades like these,
And if a devious Traveller was heard
Approaching from a distance, as might chance,
With speed and echoes loud of trampling hoofs
From the hard floor reverberated, then
It was Angelica thundering through the woods
Upon her Palfrey, or that gentler Maid
Erminia, fugitive as fair as She.
Sometimes I saw, methought, a pair of Knights
Joust underneath the trees, that, as in storm,
Did rock above their heads; anon the din
Of boisterous merriment and music's roar,
With sudden Proclamation, burst from haunt
Of Satyrs in some viewless glade, with dance
Rejoicing o'er a Female in the midst,
A mortal Beauty, their unhappy Thrall;
The width of those huge Forests, unto me
A novel scene, did often in this way
Master my fancy, while I wander'd on
With that revered Companion. And sometimes
When to a Convent in a meadow green
By a brook-side we came, a roofless Pile,
And not by reverential touch of Time
Dismantled, but by violence abrupt,
In spite of those heart-bracing colloquies,
In spite of real fervour, and of that

Less genuine and wrought up within myself
 I could not but bewail a wrong so harsh,
 And for the matin Bell to sound no more
 Griev'd, and the evening Taper, and the Cross
 High on the topmost Pinnacle, a sign
 Admonitory to the Traveller
 First seen above the woods.

And when my Friend

Pointed upon occasion to the Site
 Of Romorentin, home of ancient Kings,
 To the imperial Edifice of Blois
 Or to that rural Castle, name now slipp'd
 From my remembrance, where a Lady lodg'd
 By the first Francis wooed, and bound to him
 In chains of mutual passion; from the Tower,
 As a Tradition of the Country tells,
 Practis'd to commune with her Royal Knight
 By cressets and love-beacons, intercourse
 'Twixt her high-seated Residence and his
 Far off at Chambord on the Plain beneath:
 Even here, though less than with the peaceful House
 Religious, 'mid those frequent monuments
 Of Kings, their vices and their better deeds,
 Imagination, potent to enflame
 At times with virtuous wrath and noble scorn,
 Did also often mitigate the force
 Of civic prejudice, the bigotry,
 So call it, of a youthful Patriot's mind,
 And on these spots with many gleams I look'd
 Of chivalrous delight. Yet not the less,
 Hatred of absolute rule, where will of One
 Is law for all, and of that barren pride
 In them who, by immunities unjust,
 Betwixt the Sovereign and the People stand,
 His helper and not theirs, laid stronger hold
 Daily upon me, mix'd with pity too
 And love; for where hope is there love will be
 For the abject multitude. And when we chanc'd
 One day to meet a hunger-bitten Girl,
 Who crept along, fitting her languid gait
 Unto a Heifer's motion, by a cord

Tied to her arm, and picking thus from the lane
 Its sustenance, while the girl with her two hands
 Was busy knitting, in a heartless mood
 Of solitude, and at the sight my Friend
 In agitation said, "'Tis against *that*
 Which we are fighting," I with him believed
 Devoutly that a spirit was abroad
 Which could not be withstood, that poverty
 At least like this, would in a little time
 Be found no more, that we should see the earth
 Unthwarted in her wish to recompense
 The industrious, and the lowly Child of Toil,
 All institutes for ever blotted out
 That legalised exclusion, empty pomp
 Abolish'd, sensual state and cruel power
 Whether by edict of the one or few,
 And finally, as sum and crown of all,
 Should see the People having a strong hand
 In making their own Laws, whence better days
 To all mankind. But, these things set apart,
 Was not the single confidence enough
 To animate the mind that ever turn'd
 A thought to human welfare, that henceforth
 Captivity by mandate without law
 Should cease, and open accusation lead
 To sentence in the hearing of the world
 And open punishment, if not the air
 Be free to breathe in, and the heart of Man
 Dread nothing? Having touch'd this argument
 I shall not, as my purpose was, take note
 Of other matters which detain'd us oft
 In thought or conversation, public acts,
 And public persons, and the emotions wrought
 Within our minds by the ever-varying wind
 Of Record or Report which day by day
 Swept over us; but I will here instead
 Draw from obscurity a tragic Tale
 Not in its spirit singular indeed
 But haply worth memorial, as I heard
 The events related by my patriot Friend
 And others who had borne a part therein.

Oh! happy time of youthful Lovers! thus
 My Story may begin, Oh! balmy time
 In which a Love-knot on a Lady's brow
 Is fairer than the fairest Star in heaven!
 To such inheritance of blessedness
 Young Vaudracour was brought by years that had
 A little overstepp'd his stripling prime.
 A Town of small repute in the heart of France
 Was the Youth's Birth-place: there he vow'd his love
 To Julia, a bright Maid, from Parents sprung
 Not mean in their condition; but with rights
 Unhonour'd of Nobility, and hence
 The Father of the young Man, who had place
 Among that order, spurn'd the very thought
 Of such alliance. From their cradles up,
 With but a step between their several homes
 The pair had thriven together year by year,
 Friends, Playmates, Twins in pleasure, after strife
 And petty quarrels had grown fond again,
 Each other's advocate, each other's help,
 Nor ever happy if they were apart:
 A basis this for deep and solid love,
 And endless constancy, and placid truth;
 But whatsoever of such treasure might,
 Beneath the outside of their youth, have lain
 Reserv'd for mellow years, his present mind
 Was under fascination; he beheld
 A vision, and he lov'd the thing he saw.
 Arabian Fiction never fill'd the world
 With half the wonders that were wrought for him.
 Earth liv'd in one great presence of the spring
 Life turn'd the meanest of her implements
 Before his eyes to price above all gold,
 The house she dwelt in was a sainted shrine,
 Her chamber-window did surpass in glory
 The portals of the East, all paradise
 Could by the simple opening of a door
 Let itself in upon him, pathways, walks,
 Swarm'd with enchantment till his spirit sank
 Beneath the burthen, overbless'd for life.
 This state was theirs, till whether through effect

Of some delirious hour, or that the Youth,
 Seeing so many bars betwixt himself
 And the dear haven where he wish'd to be
 In honourable wedlock with his love
 Without a certain knowledge of his own,
 Was inwardly prepared to turn aside
 From law and custom, and entrust himself
 To Nature for a happy end of all;
 And thus abated of that pure reserve
 Congenial to his loyal heart, with which
 It would have pleas'd him to attend the steps
 Of Maiden so divinely beautiful
 I know not, but reluctantly must add
 That Julia, yet without the name of Wife
 Carried about her for a secret grief
 The promise of a Mother.

To conceal

The threaten'd shame the Parents of the Maid
 Found means to hurry her away by night
 And unforewarn'd, that in a distant Town
 She might remain shrouded in privacy,
 Until the Babe was born. When morning came
 The Lover thus bereft, stung with his loss
 And all uncertain whither he should turn
 Chafed like a wild beast in the toils; at length,
 Following as his suspicions led, he found
 O joy! sure traces of the fugitives,
 Pursu'd them to the Town where they had stopp'd,
 And lastly to the very House itself
 Which had been chosen for the Maid's retreat.
 The sequel may be easily divined,
 Walks backwards, forwards, morning, noon and night
 When decency and caution would allow
 And Julia, who, whenever to herself
 She happen'd to be left a moment's space,
 Was busy at her casement, as a Swallow
 About its nest, ere long did thus espy
 Her Lover, thence a stolen interview
 By night accomplish'd, with a ladder's help.

I pass the raptures of the Pair; such theme
 Hath by a hundred Poets been set forth

In more delightful verse than skill of mine
 Could fashion, chiefly by that darling Bard
 Who told of Juliet and her Romeo,
 And of the Lark's note heard before its time,
 And of the streaks that lac'd the severing clouds
 In the unrelenting East. 'Tis mine to tread
 The humbler province of plain history,
 And, without choice of circumstance, submissively
 Relate what I have heard. The Lovers came
 To this resolve, with which they parted, pleas'd
 And confident, that Vaudracour should hie
 Back to his Father's house, and there employ
 Means aptest to obtain a sum of gold,
 A final portion, even, if that might be,
 Which done, together they could then take flight
 To some remote and solitary place
 Where they might live with no one to behold
 Their happiness, or to disturb their love.
 Immediately, and with this mission charg'd
 Home to his Father's House the Youth return'd
 And there remain'd a while without hint given
 Of his design; but if a word were dropp'd
 Touching the matter of his passion, still
 In hearing of his Father, Vaudracour
 Persisted openly that nothing less
 Than death should make him yield up hope to be
 A blessed Husband of the Maid he loved.

Incensed at such obduracy and slight
 Of exhortations and remonstrances
 The Father threw out threats that by a mandate
 Bearing the private signet of the State
 He should be baffled of his mad intent,
 And that should cure him. From this time the Youth
 Conceiv'd a terror, and by night or day
 Stirr'd nowhere without Arms. Soon afterwards
 His Parents to their Country Seat withdrew
 Upon some feign'd occasion; and the Son
 Was left with one Attendant in the house.
 Retiring to his Chamber for the night
 While he was entering at the door, attempts
 Were made to seize him by three armed Men,

The instruments of ruffian power; the Youth
 In the first impulse of his rage, laid one
 Dead at his feet, and to the second gave
 A perilous wound, which done, at sight
 Of the dead Man, he peacefully resign'd
 His person to the Law, was lodged in prison,
 And wore the fetters of a Criminal.

Through three weeks' space, by means which love
 devis'd,
 The Maid in her seclusion had received
 Tidings of Vaudracour, and how he sped
 Upon his enterprize. Thereafter came
 A silence, half a circle did the moon
 Complete, and then a whole, and still the same
 Silence; a thousand thousand fears and hopes
 Stirr'd in her mind; thoughts waking, thoughts of sleep
 Entangled in each other, and at last
 Self-slaughter seem'd her only resting-place.
 So did she fare in her uncertainty.

At length, by interference of a Friend,
 One who had sway at Court, the Youth regain'd
 His liberty, on promise to sit down
 Quietly in his Father's House, nor take
 One step to reunite himself with her
 Of whom his Parents disapproved: hard law
 To which he gave consent only because
 His freedom else could nowise be procured.
 Back to his Father's house he went, remain'd
 Eight days, and then his resolution fail'd:
 He fled to Julia, and the words with which
 He greeted her were these. "All right is gone,
 Gone from me. Thou no longer now art mine,
 I thine; a Murderer, Julia, cannot love
 An innocent Woman; I behold thy face
 I see thee and my misery is complete."
 She could not give him answer; afterwards
 She coupled with his Father's name some words
 Of vehement indignation; but the Youth
 Check'd her, nor would he hear of this; for thought

Unfilial, or unkind, had never once
 Found harbour in his breast. The Lovers thus
 United once again together lived
 For a few days, which were to Vaudracour
 Days of dejection, sorrow and remorse
 For that ill deed of violence which his hand
 Had hastily committed: for the Youth
 Was of a loyal spirit, a conscience nice
 And over tender for the trial which
 His fate had call'd him to. The Father's mind,
 Meanwhile, remain'd unchanged, and Vaudracour
 Learn'd that a mandate had been newly issued
 To arrest him on the spot. Oh pain it was
 To part! he could not—and he linger'd still
 To the last moment of his time, and then,
 At dead of night with snow upon the ground,
 He left the City, and in Villages
 The most sequester'd of the neighbourhood
 Lay hidden for the space of several days
 Until the horseman bringing back report
 That he was nowhere to be found, the search
 Was ended. Back return'd the ill-fated Youth,
 And from the House where Julia lodg'd (to which
 He now found open ingress, having gain'd
 The affection of the family, who lov'd him
 Both for his own, and for the Maiden's sake)
 One night retiring, he was seiz'd—But here
 A portion of the Tale may well be left
 In silence, though my memory could add
 Much how the Youth, and in short space of time,
 Was travers'd from without, much, too, of thoughts
 By which he was employ'd in solitude
 Under privation and restraint, and what
 Through dark and shapeless fear of things to come,
 And what through strong compunction for the past
 He suffer'd breaking down in heart and mind.
 Such grace, if grace it were, had been vouchsafed
 Or such effect had through the Father's want
 Of power, or through his negligence ensued
 That Vaudracour was suffer'd to remain,
 Though under guard and without liberty,

THE PRELUDE

In the same City with the unhappy Maid
From whom he was divided. So they fared
Objects of general concern, till, moved
With pity for their wrongs, the Magistrate,
The same who had plac'd the Youth in custody,
By application to the Minister
Obtain'd his liberty upon condition
That to his Father's house he should return.

He left his Prison almost on the eve
Of Julia's travail; she had likewise been
As from the time indeed, when she had first
Been brought for secrecy to this abode,
Though treated with consoling tenderness,
Herself a Prisoner, a dejected one,
Fill'd with a Lover's and a Woman's fears,
And whensoever the Mistress of the House
Enter'd the Room for the last time at night
And Julia with a low and plaintive voice
Said "You are coming then to lock me up"
The Housewife when these words, always the same,
Were by her Captive languidly pronounced
Could never hear them utter'd without tears.

A day or two before her Child-bed time
Was Vaudracour restored to her, and soon
As he might be permitted to return
Into her Chamber after the Child's birth
The Master of the Family begg'd that all
The household might be summon'd, doubting not
But that they might receive impressions then
Friendly to human kindness. Vaudracour
(This heard I from one present at the time)
Held up the new-born Infant in his arms
And kiss'd, and bless'd, and cover'd it with tears,
Uttering a prayer that he might never be
As wretched as his Father; then he gave
The Child to her who bare it, and she too
Repeated the same prayer, took it again
And muttering something faintly afterwards

He gave the Infant to the Standers-by,
And wept in silence upon Julia's neck.

Two months did he continue in the House,
And often yielded up himself to plans
Of future happiness. "You shall return,
Julia," said he, "and to your Father's House
Go with your Child, you have been wretched, yet
It is a town where both of us were born,
None will reproach you, for our loves are known,
With ornaments the prettiest you shall dress
Your Boy, as soon as he can run about,
And when he thus is at his play my Father
Will see him from the window, and the Child
Will by his beauty move his Grandsire's heart,
So that it shall be soften'd, and our loves
End happily, as they began." These gleams
Appear'd but seldom; oftener was he seen
Propping a pale and melancholy face
Upon the Mother's bosom, resting thus
His head upon one breast, while from the other
The Babe was drawing in its quiet food.
At other times, when he, in silence, long
And fixedly had look'd upon her face,
He would exclaim, "Julia, how much thine eyes
Have cost me!" During day-time when the Child
Lay in its cradle, by its side he sate,
Not quitting it an instant. The whole Town
In his unmerited misfortunes now
Took part, and if he either at the door
Or window for a moment with his Child
Appear'd, immediately the Street was throng'd
While others frequently without reserve
Pass'd and repass'd before the house to steal
A look at him. Oft at this time he wrote
Requesting, since he knew that the consent
Of Julia's Parents never could be gain'd
To a clandestine marriage, that his Father
Would from the birthright of an eldest Son
Exclude him, giving but, when this was done,
A sanction to his nuptials: vain request,

To which no answer was return'd. And now
 From her own home the Mother of his Love
 Arrived to apprise the Daughter of her fix'd
 And last resolve, that, since all hope to move
 The old Man's heart prov'd vain, she must retire
 Into a Convent, and be there immured.
 Julia was thunderstricken by these words,
 And she insisted on a Mother's rights
 To take her Child along with her, a grant
 Impossible, as she at last perceived;
 The Persons of the house no sooner heard
 Of this decision upon Julia's fate
 Than everyone was overwhelm'd with grief
 Nor could they frame a manner soft enough
 To impart the tidings to the Youth; but great
 Was their astonishment when they beheld him
 Receive the news in calm despondency,
 Composed and silent, without outward sign
 Of even the least emotion; seeing this
 When Julia scatter'd some upbraiding words
 Upon his slackness he thereto return'd
 No answer, only took the Mother's hand
 Who lov'd him scarcely less than her own Child,
 And kissed it, without seeming to be press'd
 By any pain that 'twas the hand of one
 Whose errand was to part him from his Love
 For ever. In the city he remain'd
 A season after Julia had retired
 And in the Convent taken up her home
 To the end that he might place his Infant Babe
 With a fit Nurse, which done, beneath the roof
 Where now his little One was lodg'd, he pass'd
 The day entire, and scarcely could at length
 Tear himself from the cradle to return
 Home to his Father's House, in which he dwelt
 Awhile, and then came back that he might see
 Whether the Babe had gain'd sufficient strength
 To bear removal. He quitted the same Town
 For the last time, attendant by the side
 Of a close chair, a Litter or Sedan,
 In which the Child was carried. To a hill,

Which rose at a League's distance from the Town,
 The Family of the house where he had lodged
 Attended him, and parted from him there,
 Watching below till he had disappeared
 On the hill top. His eyes he scarcely took,
 Through all that journey, from the Chair in which
 The Babe was carried; and at every Inn
 Or place at which they halted or reposed
 Laid him upon his knees, nor would permit
 The hands of any but himself to dress
 The Infant or undress. By one of those
 Who bore the Chair these facts, at his return,
 Were told, and in relating them he wept.

This was the manner in which Vaudracour
 Departed with his Infant; and thus reach'd
 His Father's House, where to the innocent Child
 Admittance was denied. The young Man spake
 No word of indignation or reproof,
 But of his Father begg'd, a last request,
 That a retreat might be assigned to him,
 A house where in the Country he might dwell
 With such allowance as his wants required
 And the more lonely that the Mansion was
 'Twould be more welcome. To a lodge that stood
 Deep in a Forest, with leave given, at the age
 Of four and twenty summers he retir'd;
 And thither took with him his Infant Babe,
 And one Domestic for their common needs,
 An aged woman. It consoled him here
 To attend upon the Orphan and perform
 The office of a Nurse to his young Child
 Which after a short time by some mistake
 Or indiscretion of the Father, died.
 The Tale I follow to its last recess
 Of suffering or of peace, I know not which;
 Theirs be the blame who caused the woe, not mine.

From that time forth he never utter'd word
 To any living. An Inhabitant
 Of that same Town in which the Pair had left

THE PRELUDE

So lively a remembrance of their griefs
By chance of business coming within reach
Of his retirement to the spot repair'd
With the intent to visit him; he reach'd
The house and only found the Matron there,
Who told him that his pains were thrown away,
For that her Master never uttered word
To living soul—not even to her. Behold
While they were speaking, Vaudracour approach'd;
But, seeing some one there, just as his hand
Was stretch'd towards the garden-gate, he shrunk,
And like a shadow glided out of view.
Shock'd at his savage outside, from the place
The Visitor retired.

Thus liv'd the Youth
Cut off from all intelligence with Man,
And shunning even the light of common day;
Nor could the voice of Freedom, which through France
Soon afterwards resounded, public hope,
Or personal memory of his own deep wrongs,
Rouse him: but in those solitary shades
His days he wasted, an imbecile mind.

BOOK TENTH

Residence in France and French Revolution

IT was a beautiful and silent day
That overspread the countenance of earth,
Then fading, with unusual quietness,
When from the Loire I parted, and through scenes
Of vineyard, orchard, meadow-ground and tilth,
Calm waters, gleams of sun, and breathless trees
Towards the fierce Metropolis turn'd my steps
Their homeward way to England. From his Throne
The King had fallen; the congregated Host,
Dire cloud upon the front of which was written
The tender mercies of the dismal wind
That bore it, on the Plains of Liberty
Had burst innocuously, say more, the swarm

That came elate and jocund, like a Band
 Of Eastern Hunters, to enfold in ring
 Narrowing itself by moments and reduce
 To the last punctual spot of their despair
 A race of victims, so they seem'd, *themselves*
 Had shrunk from sight of their own task, and fled
 In terror; desolation and dismay
 Remained for them whose fancies had grown rank
 With evil expectations, confidence
 And perfect triumph to the better cause.
 The State, as if to stamp the final seal
 On her security, and to the world
 Shew what she was, a high and fearless soul,
 Or rather in a spirit of thanks to those
 Who had stirr'd up her slackening faculties
 To a new transition, had assumed with joy
 The body and the venerable name
 Of a Republic: lamentable crimes
 'Tis true had gone before this hour, the work
 Of massacre, in which the senseless sword
 Was pray'd to as a judge; but these were past,
 Earth free from them for ever, as was thought,
 Ephemeral monsters, to be seen but once;
 Things that could only shew themselves and die.

This was the time in which inflam'd with hope,
 To Paris I returned. Again I rang'd
 More eagerly than I had done before
 Through the wide City, and in progress pass'd
 The Prison where the unhappy Monarch lay,
 Associate with his Children and his Wife
 In bondage; and the Palace lately storm'd
 With roar of cannon, and a numerous host.
 I crossed (a black and empty area then)
 The Square of the Carrousel, few weeks back
 Heap'd up with dead and dying, upon these
 And other sights looking as doth a man
 Upon a volume whose contents he knows
 Are memorable, but from him lock'd up,
 Being written in a tongue he cannot read,
 So that he questions the mute leaves with pain

THE PRELUDE

And half upbraids their silence. But that night
 When on my bed I lay, I was most mov'd
 And felt most deeply in what world I was;
 My room was high and lonely, near the roof
 Of a large Mansion or Hotel, a spot
 That would have pleased me in more quiet times,
 Nor was it wholly without pleasure then.
 With unextinguish'd taper I kept watch,
 Reading at intervals; the fear gone by
 Press'd on me almost like a fear to come;
 I thought of those September Massacres,
 Divided from me by a little month,
 And felt and touch'd them, a substantial dread;
 The rest was conjured up from tragic fictions,
 And mournful Calendars of true history,
 Remembrances and dim admonishments.
 "The horse is taught his manage, and the wind
 Of heaven wheels round and treads in his own steps,
 Year follows year, the tide returns again,
 Day follows day, all things have second birth;
 The earthquake is not satisfied at once."
 And in such way I wrought upon myself,
 Until I seem'd to hear a voice that cried,
 To the whole City, "Sleep no more." To this
 Add comments of a calmer mind, from which
 I could not gather full security,
 But at the best it seem'd a place of fear
 Unfit for the repose which night requires,
 Defenceless as a wood where tigers roam.

Betimes next morning to the Palace Walk
 Of Orleans I repair'd and entering there
 Was greeted, among divers other notes,
 By voices of the Hawkers in the crowd
 Bawling, *Denunciation of the crimes*
Of Maximilian Robespierre; the speech
 Which in their hands they carried was the same
 Which had been recently pronounced, the day
 When Robespierre, well knowing for what mark
 Some words of indirect reproof had been
 Intended, rose in hardihood, and dared

The Man who had an ill surmise of him
 To bring his charge in openness, whereat
 When a dead pause ensued, and no one stirr'd,
 In silence of all present, from his seat
 Louvet walked singly through the avenue
 And took his station in the Tribune, saying,
 "I, Robespierre, accuse thee!" 'Tis well known
 What was the issue of that charge, and how
 Louvet was left alone without support
 Of his irresolute Friends; but these are things
 Of which I speak, only as they were storm
 Or sunshine to my individual mind,
 No further. Let me then relate that now
 In some sort seeing with my proper eyes
 That Liberty, and Life, and Death would soon
 To the remotest corners of the land
 Lie in the arbitrement of those who ruled
 The capital City, what was struggled for,
 And by what Combatants victory must be won,
 The indecision on their part whose aim
 Seem'd best, and the straightforward path of those
 Who in attack or in defence alike
 Were strong through their impiety, greatly I
 Was agitated; yea I could almost
 Have pray'd that throughout earth upon all souls
 By patient exercise of reason made
 Worthy of liberty, upon every soul
 Matured to live in plainness and in truth
 The gift of tongues might fall, and men arrive
 From the four quarters of the winds to do
 For France what without help she could not do,
 A work of honour; think not that to this
 I added, work of safety; from such thought
 And the least fear about the end of things
 I was as far as Angels are from guilt.

Yet did I grieve, nor only griev'd, but thought
 Of opposition and of remedies,
 An insignificant Stranger, and obscure,
 Mean as I was, and little graced with power
 Of eloquence even in my native speech,

THE PRELUDE

And all unfit for tumult or intrigue,
Yet would I willingly have taken up
A service at this time for cause so great,
However dangerous. Inly I revolv'd
How much the destiny of man had still
Hung upon single persons, that there was,
Transcendent to all local patrimony,
One Nature as there is one Sun in heaven,
That objects, even as they are great, thereby
Do come within the reach of humblest eyes,
That Man was only weak through his mistrust
And want of hope, where evidence divine
Proclaim'd to him that hope should be most sure,
That, with desires heroic and firm sense,
A Spirit thoroughly faithful to itself,
Unquenchable, unsleeping, undismay'd,
Was as an instinct among Men, a stream
That gather'd up each petty straggling rill
And vein of water, glad to be roll'd on
In safe obedience, that a mind whose rest
Was where it ought to be, in self-restraint,
In circumspection and simplicity,
Fell rarely in entire discomfiture
Below its aim, or met with from without
A treachery that defeated it or foil'd.

On the other side, I called to mind those truths
Which are the commonplaces of the Schools,
A theme for boys, too trite even to be felt,
Yet, with a revelation's liveliness,
In all their comprehensive bearings known
And visible to Philosophers of old,
Men who, to business of the world untrain'd,
Liv'd in the Shade, and to Harmodius known
And his Compeer Aristogiton, known
To Brutus, that tyrannic Power is weak,
Hath neither gratitude, nor faith, nor love,
Nor the support of good or evil men
To trust in, that the Godhead which is ours
Can never utterly be charm'd or still'd,
That nothing hath a natural right to last

But equity and reason, that all else
Meets foes irreconcilable, and at best
Doth live but by variety of disease.

Well might my wishes be intense, my thoughts
Strong and perturb'd, not doubting at that time,
Creed which ten shameful years have not annull'd,
But that the virtue of one paramount mind
Would have abash'd those impious crests, have quell'd
Outrage and bloody power, and in despite
Of what the People were through ignorance
And immaturity, and in the teeth
Of desperate opposition from without,
Have clear'd a passage for just government,
And left a solid birthright to the State,
Redeem'd according to example given
By ancient Lawgivers.

In this frame of mind,

Reluctantly to England I return'd,
Compell'd by nothing less than absolute want
Of funds for my support, else, well assured
That I both was and must be of small worth,
No better than an alien in the Land,
I doubtless should have made a common cause
With some who perish'd, haply perish'd, too,
A poor mistaken and bewilder'd offering,
Should to the breast of Nature have gone back
With all my resolutions, all my hopes,
A Poet only to myself, to Men
Useless, and even, beloved Friend! a soul
To thee unknown.

When to my native Land

(After a whole year's absence) I return'd
I found the air yet busy with the stir
Of a contention which had been rais'd up
Against the Traffickers in Negro blood,
An effort, which though baffled, nevertheless
Had call'd back old forgotten principles
Dismiss'd from service, had diffus'd some truths
And more of virtuous feeling through the heart
Of the English People. And no few of those

THE PRELUDE

So numerous (little less in verity
Than a whole Nation crying with one voice)
Who had been cross'd in this their just intent
And righteous hope, thereby were well prepared
To let that journey sleep awhile, and join
Whatever other Caravan appear'd
To travel forward towards Liberty
With more success. For me that strife had ne'er
Fasten'd on my affections, nor did now
Its unsuccessful issue much excite
My sorrow, having laid this faith to heart,
That, if France prosper'd, good Men would not long
Pay fruitless worship to humanity,
And this most rotten branch of human shame,
Object, as seem'd, of a superfluous pains
Would fall together with its parent tree.

Such was my then belief, that there was one,
And only one solicitude for all;
And now the strength of Britain was put forth
In league with the confederated Host,
Not in my single self alone I found,
But in the minds of all ingenuous Youth,
Change and subversion from this hour. No shock
Given to my moral nature had I known
Down to that very moment; neither lapse
Nor turn of sentiment that might be nam'd
A revolution, save at this one time,
All else was progress on the self-same path
On which with a diversity of pace
I had been travelling; this a stride at once
Into another region. True it is,
'Twas not conceal'd with what ungracious eyes
Our native Rulers from the very first
Had look'd upon regenerated France
Nor had I doubted that this day would come
But in such contemplation I had thought
Of general interests only, beyond this
Had [never] once foretasted the event.
Now had I other business for I felt
The ravage of this most unnatural strife

In my own heart; there lay it like a weight
 At enmity with all the tenderest springs
 Of my enjoyments. I, who with the breeze
 Had play'd, a green leaf on the blessed tree
 Of my beloved country; nor had wish'd
 For happier fortune than to wither there,
 Now from my pleasant station was cut off,
 And toss'd about in whirlwinds. I rejoiced,
 Yea, afterwards, truth most painful to record!
 Exulted in the triumph of my soul
 When Englishmen by thousands were o'erthrown,
 Left without glory on the Field, or driven,
 Brave hearts, to shameful flight. It was a grief,
 Grief call it not, 'twas anything but that,
 A conflict of sensations without name,
 Of which he only who may love the sight
 Of a Village Steeple as I do can judge
 When in the Congregation, bending all
 To their great Father, prayers were offer'd up,
 Or praises for our Country's Victories,
 And 'mid the simple worshippers, perchance,
 I only, like an uninvited Guest
 Whom no one own'd sate silent, shall I add,
 Fed on the day of vengeance yet to come?

Oh! much have they to account for, who could tear
 By violence at one decisive rent
 From the best Youth in England, their dear pride,
 Their joy, in England; this, too, at a time
 In which worst losses easily might wear
 The best of names, when patriotic love
 Did of itself in modesty give way
 Like the Precursor when the Deity
 Is come, whose Harbinger he is, a time
 In which apostacy from ancient faith
 Seem'd but conversion to a higher creed,
 Withal a season dangerous and wild,
 A time in which Experience would have pluck'd
 Flowers out of any hedge to make thereof
 A Chaplet, in contempt of his grey locks.

Ere yet the Fleet of Britain had gone forth
 On this unworthy service, whereunto
 The unhappy counsel of a few weak Men
 Had doom'd it, I beheld the Vessels lie,
 A brood of gallant Creatures, on the Deep
 I saw them in their rest, a sojourner
 Through a whole month of calm and glassy days,
 In that delightful Island which protects
 Their place of convocation; there I heard
 Each evening, walking by the still sea-shore,
 A monitory sound that never fail'd,
 The sunset cannon. While the Orb went down
 In the tranquillity of Nature, came
 That voice, ill requiem! seldom heard by me
 Without a spirit overcast, a deep
 Imagination, thought of woes to come,
 And sorrow for mankind, and pain of heart.

In France, the Men who for their desperate ends
 Had pluck'd up mercy by the roots were glad
 Of this new enemy. Tyrants, strong before
 In devilish pleas were ten times stronger now,
 And thus beset with Foes on every side
 The goaded Land waxed mad; the crimes of few
 Spread into madness of the many, blasts
 From hell came sanctified like airs from heaven;
 The sternest of the Just, the faith of those
 Who doubted not that Providence had times
 Of anger and of vengeance,—theirs who throned
 The human Understanding paramount
 And made of that their God, the hopes of those
 Who were content to barter short-lived pangs
 For a paradise of ages, the blind rage
 Of insolent tempers, the light vanity
 Of intermeddlers, steady purposes
 Of the suspicious, slips of the indiscreet,
 And all the accidents of life were press'd
 Into one service, busy with one work;
 The Senate was heart-stricken, not a voice
 Uplifted, none to oppose or mitigate;
 Domestic carnage now filled all the year

With Feast-days; the old Man from the chimney-nook,
 The Maiden from the bosom of her Love,
 The Mother from the Cradle of her Babe,
 The Warrior from the Field, all perish'd, all,
 Friends, enemies, of all parties, ages, ranks,
 Head after head, and never heads enough
 For those that bade them fall: they found their joy,
 They made it, ever thirsty as a Child,
 If light desires of innocent little Ones
 May with such heinous appetites be match'd,
 Having a toy, a wind-mill, though the air
 Do of itself blow fresh, and make the vane
 Spin in his eyesight, he is not content
 But with the plaything at arm's length he sets
 His front against the blast, and runs amain,
 To make it whirl the faster.

In the depth

Of those enormities, even thinking minds
 Forgot at seasons whence they had their being,
 Forgot that such a sound was ever heard
 As Liberty upon earth: yet all beneath
 Her innocent authority was wrought,
 Nor could have been, without her blessed name.
 The illustrious Wife of Roland, in the hour
 Of her composure, felt that agony
 And gave it vent in her last words. O Friend!
 It was a lamentable time for man
 Whether a hope had e'er been his or not,
 A woeful time for them whose hopes did still
 Outlast the shock; most woeful for those few,
 They had the deepest feeling of the grief,
 Who still were flattered, and had trust in man.
 Meanwhile, the Invaders fared as they deserv'd;
 The Herculean Commonwealth had put forth her arms
 And throttled with an infant Godhead's might
 The snakes about her cradle; that was well
 And as it should be, yet no cure for those
 Whose souls were sick with pain of what would be
 Hereafter brought in charge against mankind;
 Most melancholy at that time, O Friend!
 Were my day-thoughts, my dreams were miserable;

THE PRELUDE

Through months, through years, long after the last beat
Of those atrocities (I speak bare truth,
As if to thee alone in private talk)
I scarcely had one night of quiet sleep
Such ghastly visions had I of despair
And tyranny, and implements of death,
And long orations which in dreams I pleaded
Before unjust Tribunals, with a voice
Labouring, a brain confounded, and a sense,
Of treachery and desertion in the place
The holiest that I knew of, my own soul.

When I began at first, in early youth
To yield myself to Nature, when that strong
And holy passion overcame me first,
Neither the day or night, evening or morn
Were free from the oppression; but, Great God!
Who send'st thyself into this breathing world
Through Nature and through every kind of life,
And mak'st man what he is, Creature divine,
In single or in social eminence
Above all these rais'd infinite ascents
When reason, which enables him to be,
Is not sequester'd, what a change is here!
How different ritual for this after worship
What countenance to promote this second love
That first was service but to things which lie
At rest, within the bosom of thy will:
Therefore to serve was high beatitude;
The tumult was a gladness, and the fear
Ennobling, venerable; sleep secure,
And waking thoughts more rich than happiest dreams.

But as the ancient Prophets were inflam'd
Nor wanted consolations of their own
And majesty of mind, when they denounced
On Towns and Cities, wallowing in the abyss
Of their offences, punishment to come;
Or saw like other men with bodily eyes
Before them in some desolated place
The consummation of the wrath of Heaven,

So did some portions of that spirit fall
 On me, to uphold me through those evil times,
 And in their rage and dog-day heat I found
 Something to glory in, as just and fit,
 And in the order of sublimest laws;
 And even if that were not, amid the awe
 Of unintelligible chastisement,
 I felt a kind of sympathy with power,
 Motions rais'd up within me, nevertheless,
 Which had relationship to highest things.
 Wild blasts of music thus did find their way
 Into the midst of turbulent events,
 So that worst tempests might be listen'd to:
 Then was the truth received into my heart,
 That under heaviest sorrow earth can bring,
 Griefs bitterest of ourselves or of our kind,
 If from the affliction somewhere do not grow
 Honour which could not else have been, a faith,
 An elevation, and a sanctity,
 If new strength be not given, or old restored
 The blame is ours not Nature's. When a taunt
 Was taken up by Scoffers in their pride,
 Saying, "behold the harvest which we reap
 From popular Government and Equality,"
 I saw that it was neither these, nor aught
 Of wild belief engrafted on their names
 By false philosophy, that caus'd the woe,
 But that it was a reservoir of guilt
 And ignorance, fill'd up from age to age,
 That could no longer hold its loathsome charge,
 But burst and spread in deluge through the Land.

And as the desart hath green spots, the sea
 Small islands in the midst of stormy waves,
 So that disastrous period did not want
 Such sprinklings of all human excellence,
 As were a joy to hear of. Yet (nor less
 For those bright spots, those fair examples given
 Of fortitude, and energy, and love,
 And human nature faithful to itself
 Under worst trials) was I impell'd to think

THE PRELUDE

Of the glad time when first I traversed France,
A youthful pilgrim, above all remember'd.
That day when through an Arch that spann'd the street,
A rainbow made of garish ornaments,
Triumphal pomp for Liberty confirm'd,
We walk'd, a pair of weary Travellers,
Along the Town of Arras, place from which
Issued that Robespierre, who afterwards
Wielded the sceptre of the atheist crew.
When the calamity spread far and wide,
And this same City, which had then appear'd
To outrun the rest in exultation, groan'd
Under the vengeance of her cruel Son,
As Lear reproach'd the winds, I could almost
Have quarrel'd with that blameless spectacle
For being yet an image in my mind
To mock me under such a strange reverse.

O Friend! few happier moments have been mine
Through my whole life than that when first I heard
That this foul Tribe of Moloch was o'erthrown,
And their chief Regent levell'd with the dust.
The day was one which haply may deserve
A separate chronicle. Having gone abroad
From a small Village where I tarried then,
To the same far-secluded privacy
I was returning. Over the smooth Sands
Of Leven's ample Æstuary lay
My journey, and beneath a genial sun;
With distant prospect among gleams of sky
And clouds, and intermingled mountain tops,
In one inseparable glory clad,
Creatures of one ethereal substance, met
In Consistory, like a diadem
Or crown of burning Seraphs, as they sit
In the Empyrean. Underneath this show
Lay, as I knew, the nest of pastoral vales
Among whose happy fields I had grown up
From childhood. On the fulgent spectacle
Which neither changed, nor stirr'd, nor pass'd away,
I gazed, and with a fancy more alive

On this account, that I had chanced to find
 That morning, ranging thro' the churchyard graves
 Of Cartmell's rural Town, the place in which
 An honor'd Teacher of my youth was laid.
 While we were Schoolboys he had died among us,
 And was borne hither, as I knew, to rest
 With his own Family. A plain Stone, inscribed
 With name, date, office, pointed out the spot,
 To which a slip of verses was subjoin'd,
 (By his desire, as afterwards I learn'd)
 A fragment from the Elegy of Gray.
 A week, or little less, before his death
 He had said to me, "my head will soon lie low;"
 And when I saw the turf that cover'd him,
 After the lapse of full eight years, those words,
 With sound of voice, and countenance of the Man,
 Came back upon me; so that some few tears
 Fell from me in my own despite. And now,
 Thus travelling smoothly o'er the level Sands,
 I thought with pleasure of the Verses, graven
 Upon his Tombstone, saying to myself
 He loved the Poets, and if now alive,
 Would have loved me, as one not destitute
 Of promise, nor belying the kind hope
 That he had form'd, when I at his command,
 Began to spin, at first, my toilsome Songs.

Without me and within, as I advanced,
 All that I saw, or felt, or communed with
 Was gentleness and peace. Upon a small
 And rocky Island near, a fragment stood
 (Itself like a sea rock) of what had been
 A Romish Chapel, where in ancient times
 Masses were said at the hour which suited those
 Who crossed the Sands with ebb of morning tide.
 Not far from this still Ruin all the Plain
 Was spotted with a variegated crowd
 Of Coaches, Wains, and Travellers, horse and foot,
 Wading, beneath the conduct of their Guide
 In loose procession through the shallow Stream
 Of inland water; the great Sea meanwhile

Was at safe distance, far retired. I paused,
 Unwilling to proceed, the scene appear'd
 So gay and chearful, when a Traveller
 Chancing to pass, I carelessly inquired
 If any news were stirring; he replied
 In the familiar language of the day
 That, *Robespierre was dead*. Nor was a doubt,
 On further question, left within my mind
 But that the tidings were substantial truth;
 That he and his supporters all were fallen.

Great was my glee of spirit, great my joy
 In vengeance, and eternal justice, thus
 Made manifest. "Come now ye golden times,"
 Said I, forth-breathing, on those open Sands
 A Hymn of triumph, "as the morning comes
 Out of the bosom of the night, come Ye:
 Thus far our trust is verified; behold!
 They who with clumsy desperation brought
 Rivers of Blood, and preached that nothing else
 Could cleanse the Augean Stable, by the might
 Of their own helper have been swept away;
 Their madness is declared and visible,
 Elsewhere will safety now be sought, and Earth
 March firmly towards righteousness and peace."
 Then schemes I framed more calmly, when and how
 The madding Factions might be tranquillised,
 And, though through hardships manifold and long,
 The mighty renovation would proceed;
 Thus, interrupted by uneasy bursts
 Of exultation, I pursued my way
 Along that very Shore which I had skimm'd
 In former times, when, spurring from the Vale
 Of Nightshade, and St. Mary's mouldering Fane,
 And the Stone Abbot, after circuit made
 In wantonness of heart, a joyous Crew
 Of School-boys, hastening to their distant home,
 Along the margin of the moonlight Sea,
 We beat with thundering hoofs the level Sand.

From this time forth, in France, as is well known,
 Authority put on a milder face,

Yet everything was wanting that might give
 Courage to them who look'd for good by light
 Of rational experience, good I mean
 At hand, and in the spirit of past aims.
 The same belief I, nevertheless, retain'd;
 The language of the Senate and the acts
 And public measures of the Government,
 Though both of heartless omen, had no power
 To daunt me; in the People was my trust
 And in the virtues which mine eyes had seen,
 And to the ultimate repose of things
 I look'd with unabated confidence;
 I knew that wound external could not take
 Life from the young Republic, that new foes
 Would only follow in the path of shame
 Their brethren, and her triumphs be in the end
 Great, universal, irresistible.
 This faith, which was an object in my mind
 Of passionate intuition, had effect
 Not small in dazzling me; for thus, thro' zeal,
 Such victory I confounded in my thoughts
 With one far higher and more difficult,
 Triumphs of unambitious peace at home
 And noiseless fortitude. Beholding still
 Resistance strong as heretofore, I thought
 That what was in degree the same, was likewise
 The same in quality, that, as the worse
 Of the two spirits then at strife remain'd
 Untired, the better surely would preserve
 The heart that first had rouzed him, never dreamt
 That transmigration could be undergone
 A fall of being suffer'd, and of hope
 By creature that appear'd to have received
 Entire conviction what a great ascent
 Had been accomplish'd, what high faculties
 It had been call'd to. Youth maintains, I knew,
 In all conditions of society,
 Communion more direct and intimate
 With Nature, and the inner strength she has,
 And hence, oft-times, no less, with Reason too,
 Than Age or Manhood, even. To Nature then,

Power had reverted: habit, custom, law,
 Had left an interregnum's open space
 For her to stir about in, uncontrol'd.
 The warmest judgments and the most untaught
 Found in events which every day brought forth
 Enough to sanction them, and far, far more
 To shake the authority of canons drawn
 From ordinary practice. I could see
 How Babel-like the employment was of those
 Who, by the recent deluge stupefied,
 With their whole souls went culling from the day
 Its petty promises to build a tower
 For their own safety; laughed at gravest heads,
 Who, watching in their hate of France for signs
 Of her disasters, if the stream of rumour
 Brought with it one green branch, conceited thence
 That not a single tree was left alive
 In all her forests. How could I believe
 That wisdom could in any shape come near
 Men clinging to delusions so insane?
 And thus, experience proving that no few
 Of my opinions had been just, I took
 Like credit to myself where less was due,
 And thought that other notions were as sound,
 Yea, could not but be right, because I saw
 That foolish men opposed them.

To a strain

More animated I might here give way,
 And tell, since juvenile errors are my theme,
 What in those days through Britain was perform'd
 To turn *all* judgments out of their right course;
 But this is passion over-near ourselves,
 Reality too close and too intense,
 And mingled up with something, in my mind,
 Of scorn and condemnation personal,
 That would profane the sanctity of verse.
 Our Shepherds (this say merely) at that time
 Thirsted to make the guardian Crook of Law
 A tool of Murder; they who ruled the State,
 Though with such awful proof before their eyes
 That he who would sow death, reaps death, or worse,

And can reap nothing better, child-like long'd
 To imitate, not wise enough to avoid,
 Giants in their impiety alone,
 But, in their weapons and their warfare base
 As vermin working out of reach, they leagu'd
 Their strength perfidiously, to undermine
 Justice, and make an end of Liberty.

But from these bitter truths I must return
 To my own History. It hath been told
 That I was led to take an eager part
 In arguments of civil polity
 Abruptly, and indeed before my time:
 I had approach'd, like other Youth, the Shield
 Of human nature from the golden side
 And would have fought, even to the death, to attest
 The quality of the metal which I saw.
 What there is best in individual Man,
 Of wise in passion, and sublime in power,
 What there is strong and pure in household love,
 Benevolent in small societies,
 And great in large ones also, when call'd forth
 By great occasions, these were things of which
 I something knew, yet even these themselves,
 Felt deeply, were not thoroughly understood
 By Reason; nay, far from it, they were yet,
 As cause was given me afterwards to learn,
 Not proof against the injuries of the day,
 Lodged only at the Sanctuary's door,
 Not safe within its bosom. Thus prepared,
 And with such general insight into evil,
 And of the bounds which sever it from good,
 As books and common intercourse with life
 Must needs have given; to the novice mind,
 When the world travels in a beaten road,
 Guide faithful as is needed, I began
 To think with fervour upon management
 Of Nations, what it is and ought to be,
 And how their worth depended on their Laws
 And on the Constitution of the State.

O pleasant exercise of hope and joy!
 For great were the auxiliars which then stood
 Upon our side, we who were strong in love;
 Bliss was it in that dawn to be alive,
 But to be young was very heaven; O times,
 In which the meagre, stale, forbidding ways
 Of custom, law, and statute took at once
 The attraction of a Country in Romance;
 When Reason seem'd the most to assert her rights
 When most intent on making of herself
 A prime Enchanter to assist the work,
 Which then was going forwards in her name.
 Not favour'd spots alone, but the whole earth
 The beauty wore of promise, that which sets,
 To take an image which was felt, no doubt,
 Among the bowers of paradise itself,
 The budding rose above the rose full blown.
 What temper at the prospect did not wake
 To happiness unthought of? The inert
 Were rous'd, and lively natures rapt away:
 They who had fed their childhood upon dreams,
 The Play-fellows of Fancy, who had made
 All powers of swiftness, subtlety, and strength
 Their ministers, used to stir in lordly wise
 Among the grandest objects of the sense,
 And deal with whatsoever they found there
 As if they had within some lurking right
 To wield it; they too, who, of gentle mood
 Had watch'd all gentle motions, and to these
 Had fitted their own thoughts, schemers more mild,
 And in the region of their peaceful selves,
 Did now find helpers to their hearts' desire,
 And stuff at hand, plastic as they could wish,
 Were call'd upon to exercise their skill,
 Not in Utopia, subterraneous Fields,
 Or some secreted Island, Heaven knows where,
 But in the very world which is the world
 Of all of us, the place in which, in the end,
 We find our happiness, or not at all.

Why should I not confess that earth was then
 To me what an inheritance new-fallen

Seems, when the first time visited, to one
 Who thither comes to find in it his home?
 He walks about and looks upon the place
 With cordial transport, moulds it, and remoulds,
 And is half pleased with things that are amiss,
 'Twill be such joy to see them disappear.

An active partisan, I thus convoked
 From every object pleasant circumstance
 To suit my ends; I moved among mankind
 With genial feelings still predominant;
 When erring, erring on the better part,
 And in the kinder spirit; placable,
 Indulgent oft-times to the worst desires
 As on one side not uninform'd that men
 See as it hath been taught them, and that time
 Gives rights to error; on the other hand
 That throwing off oppression must be work
 As well of license as of liberty;
 And above all, for this was more than all,
 Not caring if the wind did now and then
 Blow keen upon an eminence that gave
 Prospect so large into futurity;
 In brief, a child of nature, as at first,
 Diffusing only those affections wider
 That from the cradle had grown up with me,
 And losing, in no other way than light
 Is lost in light, the weak in the more strong.

In the main outline, such, it might be said,
 Was my condition, till with open war
 Britain opposed the Liberties of France;
 This threw me first out of the pale of love;
 Sour'd and corrupted upwards to the source
 My sentiments, was not, as hitherto,
 A swallowing up of lesser things in great;
 But change of them into their opposites,
 And thus a way was opened for mistakes
 And false conclusions of the intellect,
 As gross in their degree and in their kind
 Far, far more dangerous. What had been a pride
 Was now a shame; my likings and my loves
 Ran in new channels, leaving old ones dry,

And hence a blow which, in maturer age,
 Would but have touch'd the judgment struck more deep
 Into sensations near the heart: meantime,
 As from the first, wild theories were afloat,
 Unto the subtleties of which, at least,
 I had but lent a careless ear, assured
 Of this, that time would soon set all things right,
 Prove that the multitude had been oppressed,
 And would be so no more.

But when events
 Brought less encouragement, and unto these
 The immediate proof of principles no more
 Could be entrusted, while the events themselves,
 Worn out in greatness, and in novelty,
 Less occupied the mind, and sentiments
 Could through my understanding's natural growth
 No longer justify themselves through faith
 Of inward consciousness, and hope that laid
 Its hand upon its object, evidence
 Safer, of universal application, such
 As could not be impeach'd, was sought elsewhere.

And now, become oppressors in their turn,
 Frenchmen had changed a war of self-defence
 For one of conquest, losing sight of all
 Which they had struggled for; and mounted up,
 Openly, in the view of earth and heaven,
 The scale of Liberty. I read her doom,
 Vex'd inly somewhat, it is true, and sore;
 But not dismay'd, nor taking to the shame
 Of a false Prophet; but, rous'd up I stuck
 More firmly to old tenets, and to prove
 Their temper, strained them more, and thus in heat
 Of contest did opinions every day
 Grow into consequence, till round my mind
 They clung, as if they were the life of it.

This was the time when all things tending fast
 To depravation, the Philosophy
 That promised to abstract the hopes of man
 Out of his feelings, to be fix'd thenceforth

For ever in a purer element
 Found ready welcome. Tempting region that
 For Zeal to enter and refresh herself,
 Where passions had the privilege to work,
 And never hear the sound of their own names;
 But, speaking more in charity, the dream
 Was flattering to the young ingenuous mind
 Pleas'd with extremes, and not the least with that
 Which makes the human Reason's naked self
 The object of its fervour. What delight!
 How glorious! in self-knowledge and self-rule,
 To look through all the frailties of the world,
 And, with a resolute mastery shaking off
 The accidents of nature, time, and place,
 That make up the weak being of the past,
 Build social freedom on its only basis,
 The freedom of the individual mind,
 Which, to the blind restraints of general laws
 Superior, magisterially adopts
 One guide, the light of circumstances, flash'd
 Upon an independent intellect.

For howsoe'er unsettled, never once
 Had I thought ill of human kind, or been
 Indifferent to its welfare, but, enflamed
 With thirst of a secure intelligence
 And sick of other passion, I pursued
 A higher nature, wish'd that Man should start
 Out of the worm-like state in which he is,
 And spread abroad the wings of Liberty,
 Lord of himself, in undisturb'd delight—
 A noble aspiration, yet I feel
 The aspiration, but with other thoughts
 And happier; for I was perplex'd and sought
 To accomplish the transition by such means
 As did not lie in nature, sacrificed
 The exactness of a comprehensive mind
 To scrupulous and microscopic views
 That furnish'd out materials for a work
 Of false imagination, placed beyond
 The limits of experience and of truth.

Enough, no doubt, the advocates themselves
 Of ancient institutions had perform'd
 To bring disgrace upon their very names,
 Disgrace of which custom and written law
 And sundry moral sentiments as props
 And emanations of those institutes
 Too justly bore a part. A veil had been
 Uplifted; why deceive ourselves? 'Twas so,
 'Twas even so, and sorrow for the Man
 Who either had not eyes wherewith to see,
 Or seeing hath forgotten. Let this pass,
 Suffice it that a shock had then been given
 To old opinions; and the minds of all men
 Had felt it; that my mind was both let loose,
 Let loose and goaded. After what had been
 Already said of patriotic love,
 And hinted at in other sentiments
 We need not linger long upon this theme.
 This only may be said, that from the first
 Having two natures in me, joy the one
 The other melancholy, and withal
 A happy man, and therefore bold to look
 On painful things, slow, somewhat, too, and stern
 In temperament, I took the knife in hand
 And stopping not at parts less sensitive,
 Endeavoured with my best of skill to probe
 The living body of society
 Even to the heart; I push'd without remorse
 My speculations forward; yea, set foot
 On Nature's holiest places. Time may come
 When some dramatic Story may afford
 Shapes livelier to convey to thee, my Friend,
 What then I learn'd, or think I learn'd, of truth,
 And the errors into which I was betray'd
 By present objects, and by reasonings false
 From the beginning, inasmuch as drawn
 Out of a heart which had been turn'd aside
 From Nature by external accidents,
 And which was thus confounded more and more,
 Misguiding and misguided. Thus I fared,
 Dragging all passions, notions, shapes of faith,

Like culprits to the bar, suspiciously
 Calling the mind to establish in plain day
 Her titles and her honours, now believing,
 Now disbelieving, endlessly perplex'd
 With impulse, motive, right and wrong, the ground
 Of moral obligation, what the rule
 And what the sanction, till, demanding *proof*,
 And seeking it in everything, I lost
 All feeling of conviction, and, in fine,
 Sick, wearied out with contrarieties,
 Yielded up moral questions in despair,
 And for my future studies, as the sole
 Employment of the enquiring faculty,
 Turn'd towards mathematics, and their clear
 And solid evidence—Ah! then it was
 That Thou, most precious Friend! about this time
 First known to me, didst lend a living help
 To regulate my Soul, and then it was
 That the belovèd Woman in whose sight
 Those days were pass'd, now speaking in a voice
 Of sudden admonition, like a brook
 That did but cross a lonely road, and now
 Seen, heard and felt, and caught at every turn,
 Companion never lost through many a league,
 Maintained for me a saving intercourse
 With my true self; for, though impair'd and chang'd
 Much, as it seemed, I was no further chang'd
 Than as a clouded, not a waning moon:
 She, in the midst of all, preserv'd me still
 A Poet, made me seek beneath that name
 My office upon earth, and nowhere else,
 And lastly, Nature's Self, by human love
 Assisted, through the weary labyrinth
 Conducted me again to open day,
 Revived the feelings of my earlier life,
 Gave me that strength and knowledge full of peace,
 Enlarged, and never more to be disturb'd,
 Which through the steps of our degeneracy,
 All degradation of this age, hath still
 Upheld me, and upholds me at this day
 In the catastrophe (for so they dream,

And nothing less), when finally, to close
 And rivet up the gains of France, a Pope
 Is summon'd in to crown an Emperor;
 This last opprobrium, when we see the dog
 Returning to his vomit, when the sun
 That rose in splendour, was alive, and moved
 In exultation among living clouds
 Hath put his function and his glory off,
 And turned into a gewgaw, a machine,
 Sets like an opera phantom.

Thus, O Friend!

Through times of honour, and through times of shame,
 Have I descended, tracing faithfully
 The workings of a youthful mind, beneath
 The breath of great events, its hopes no less
 Than universal, and its boundless love;
 A Story destined for thy ear, who now,
 Among the basest and the lowest fallen
 Of all the race of men, dost make abode
 Where Etna looketh down on Syracuse,
 The city of Timoleon! Living God!
 How are the Mighty prostrated! they first,
 They first of all that breathe should have awakened
 When the great voice was heard from out the tombs
 Of ancient Heroes. If for France I have griev'd
 Who, in the judgment of no few, hath been
 A trifle only, in her proudest day,
 Have been distress'd to think of what she once
 Promised, now is, a far more sober cause
 Thine eyes must see of sorrow, in a Land
 Strew'd with the wreck of loftiest years, a Land
 Glorious indeed, substantially renown'd
 Of simple virtue once, and manly praise,
 Now without one memorial hope, not even
 A hope to be deferr'd; for that would serve
 To cheer the heart in such entire decay.

But indignation works where hope is not,
 And thou, O Friend! wilt be refresh'd. There is
 One great Society alone on earth,
 The noble Living and the noble Dead:

Thy consolation shall be there, and Time
 And Nature shall before thee spread in store
 Imperishable thoughts, the Place itself
 Be conscious of thy presence, and the dull
 Sirocco air of its degeneracy
 Turn as thou mov'st into a healthful breeze
 To cherish and invigorate thy frame.

Thine be those motions strong and sanative,
 A ladder for thy Spirit to reascend
 To health and joy and pure contentedness;
 To me the grief confined that Thou art gone
 From this last spot of earth where Freedom now
 Stands single in her only sanctuary,
 A lonely wanderer, art gone, by pain
 Compell'd and sickness, at this latter day,
 This heavy time of change for all mankind;
 I feel for Thee, must utter what I feel:
 The sympathies, erewhile, in part discharg'd,
 Gather afresh, and will have vent again:
 My own delights do scarcely seem to me
 My own delights; the lordly Alps themselves,
 Those rosy Peaks, from which the Morning looks
 Abroad on many Nations, are not now
 Since thy migration and departure, Friend,
 The gladsome image in my memory
 Which they were used to be; to kindred scenes,
 On errand, at a time how different!
 Thou tak'st thy way, carrying a heart more ripe
 For all divine enjoyment, with the soul
 Which Nature gives to Poets, now by thought
 Matur'd, and in the summer of its strength.
 Oh! wrap him in your Shades, ye Giant Woods,
 On Etna's side, and thou, O flowery Vale
 Of Enna! is there not some nook of thine,
 From the first playtime of the infant earth
 Kept sacred to restorative delight?

Child of the mountains, among Shepherds rear'd
 Even from my earliest school-day time, I lov'd
 To dream of Sicily; and now a strong

And vital promise wafted from that Land
 Comes o'er my heart; there's not a single name
 Of note belonging to that honor'd isle,
 Philosopher or Bard, Empedocles,
 Or Archimedes, deep and tranquil Soul!
 That is not like a comfort to my grief:
 And, O Theocritus, so far have some
 Prevail'd among the Powers of heaven and earth,
 By force of graces which were their's, that they
 Have had, as thou reportest, miracles
 Wrought for them in old time: yea, not unmov'd,
 When thinking on my own beloved Friend,
 I hear thee tell how bees with honey fed
 Divine Comates, by his tyrant lord
 Within a chest imprison'd impiously
 How with their honey from the fields they came
 And fed him there, alive, from month to month,
 Because the Goatherd, blessed Man! had lips
 Wet with the Muses' Nectar.

Thus I soothe

The pensive moments by this calm fire side,
 And find a thousand fancied images
 That cheer the thoughts of those I love, and mine.
 Our prayers have been accepted; Thou wilt stand
 Not as an Exile but a Visitant
 On Etna's top; by pastoral Arethuse
 Or, if that fountain be in truth no more,
 Then near some other Spring, which by the name
 Thou gratest, willingly deceived,
 Shalt linger as a gladsome Votary,
 And not a Captive, pining for his home.

BOOK ELEVENTH

Imagination, How Impaired and Restored

LONG time hath Man's unhappiness and guilt
 L Detain'd us; with what dismal sights beset
 For the outward view, and inwardly oppress'd
 With sorrow, disappointment, vexing thoughts,

Confusion of opinion, zeal decay'd,
 And lastly, utter loss of hope itself,
 And things to hope for. Not with these began
 Our Song, and not with these our Song must end:
 Ye motions of delight, that through the fields
 Stir gently, breezes and soft airs that breathe
 The breath of Paradise, and find your way
 To the recesses of the soul! Ye Brooks
 Muttering along the stones, a busy noise
 By day, a quiet one in silent night,
 And you, ye Groves, whose ministry it is
 To interpose the covert of your shades,
 Even as a sleep, betwixt the heart of man
 And the uneasy world, 'twixt man himself,
 Not seldom, and his own unquiet heart,
 Oh! that I had a music and a voice,
 Harmonious as your own, that I might tell
 What ye have done for me. The morning shines,
 Nor heedeth Man's perverseness; Spring returns,
 I saw the Spring return, when I was dead
 To deeper hope, yet had I joy for her,
 And welcomed her benevolence, rejoiced
 In common with the Children of her Love,
 Plants, insects, beasts in field, and birds in bower.
 So neither were complacency nor peace
 Nor tender yearnings wanting for my good
 Through those distracted times; in Nature still
 Glorifying, I found a counterpoise in her,
 Which, when the spirit of evil was at height
 Maintain'd for me a secret happiness;
 Her I resorted to, and lov'd so much
 I seem'd to love as much as heretofore;
 And yet this passion, fervent as it was,
 Had suffer'd change; how could there fail to be
 Some change, if merely hence, that years of life
 Were going on, and with them loss or gain
 Inevitable, sure alternative.

This History, my Friend, hath chiefly told
 Of intellectual power, from stage to stage
 Advancing, hand in hand with love and joy,

And of imagination teaching truth
 Until that natural graciousness of mind
 Gave way to over-pressure from the times
 And their disastrous issues. What avail'd,
 When Spells forbade the Voyager to land,
 The fragrance which did ever and anon
 Give notice of the Shore, from harbours breathed
 Of blessed sentiment and fearless love?
 What did such sweet remembrances avail,
 Perfidious then, as seem'd, what serv'd they then?
 My business was upon the barren sea,
 My errand was to sail to other coasts.
 Shall I avow that I had hope to see,
 I mean that future times would surely see
 The man to come parted as by a gulph,
 From him who had been, that I could no more
 Trust the elevation which had made me one
 With the great Family that here and there
 Is scatter'd through the abyss of ages past,
 Sage, Patriot, Lover, Hero; for it seem'd
 That their best virtues were not free from taint
 Of something false and weak, which could not stand
 The open eye of Reason. Then I said,
 Go to the Poets; they will speak to thee
 More perfectly of purer creatures, yet
 If Reason be nobility in man,
 Can aught be more ignoble than the man
 Whom they describe, would fasten if they may
 Upon our love by sympathies of truth.

Thus strangely did I war against myself;
 A Bigot to a new Idolatry
 Did like a Monk who hath forsworn the world
 Zealously labour to cut off my heart
 From all the sources of her former strength;
 And, as by simple waving of a wand
 The wizard instantaneously dissolves
 Palace or grove, even so did I unsoul
 As readily by syllogistic words
 Some charm of Logic, ever within reach,
 Those mysteries of passion which have made,

And shall continue evermore to make,
(In spite of all that Reason hath perform'd
And shall perform to exalt and to refine)
One brotherhood of all the human race
Through all the habitations of past years
And those to come, and hence an emptiness
Fell on the Historian's Page, and even on that
Of Poets, pregnant with more absolute truth.
The works of both wither'd in my esteem
Their sentence was, I thought, pronounc'd; their rights
Seem'd mortal, and their empire pass'd away.

What then remained in such eclipse? what light
To guide or cheer? The laws of things which lie
Beyond the reach of human will or power;
The life of nature, by the God of love
Inspired, celestial presence ever pure;
These left, the Soul of Youth must needs be rich,
Whatever else be lost, and these were mine,
Not a deaf echo, merely, of the thought
Bewilder'd recollections, solitary,
But living sounds. Yet in despite of this,
This feeling, which howe'er impair'd or damp'd,
Yet having been once born can never die.
'Tis true that Earth with all her appanage
Of elements and organs, storm and sunshine,
With its pure forms and colours, pomp of clouds
Rivers and mountains, objects among which
It might be thought that no dislike or blame,
No sense of weakness or infirmity
Or aught amiss could possibly have come,
Yea, even the visible universe was scann'd
With something of a kindred spirit, fell
Beneath the domination of a taste
Less elevated, which did in my mind
With its more noble influence interfere,
Its animation and its deeper sway.

There comes (if need be now to speak of this
After such long detail of our mistakes)
There comes a time when Reason, not the grand

And simple Reason, but that humbler power
 Which carries on its no inglorious work
 By logic and minute analysis
 Is of all Idols that which pleases most
 The growing mind. A Trifler would he be
 Who on the obvious benefits should dwell
 That rise out of this process; but to speak
 Of all the narrow estimates of things
 Which hence originate were a worthy theme
 For philosophic Verse; suffice it here
 To hint that danger cannot but attend
 Upon a Function rather proud to be
 The enemy of falsehood, than the friend
 Of truth, to sit in judgment than to feel.

Oh! soul of Nature, excellent and fair,
 That didst rejoice with me, with whom I too
 Rejoiced, through early youth before the winds
 And powerful waters, and in lights and shades
 That march'd and countermarch'd about the hills
 In glorious apparition, now all eye
 And now all ear; but ever with the heart
 Employ'd, and the majestic intellect,
 Oh! Soul of Nature! that dost overflow
 With passion and with life, what feeble men
 Walk on this earth! how feeble have I been
 When thou wert in thy strength! Nor this through stroke
 Of human suffering, such as justifies
 Remissness and inaptitude of mind,
 But through presumption, even in pleasure pleas'd
 Unworthily, disliking here, and there,
 Liking, by rules of mimic art transferr'd
 To things above all art. But more, for this,
 Although a strong infection of the age,
 Was never much my habit, giving way
 To a comparison of scene with scene,
 Bent overmuch on superficial things,
 Pampering myself with meagre novelties
 Of colour and proportion, to the moods
 Of time and season, to the moral power
 The affections, and the spirit of the place,

Less sensible. Nor only did the love
 Of sitting thus in judgment interrupt
 My deeper feelings, but another cause
 More subtle and less easily explain'd
 That almost seems inherent in the Creature,
 Sensuous and intellectual as he is,
 A twofold Frame of body and of mind;
 The state to which I now allude was one
 In which the eye was master of the heart,
 When that which is in every stage of life
 The most despotic of our senses gain'd
 Such strength in me as often held my mind
 In absolute dominion. Gladly here,
 Entering upon abstruser argument,
 Would I endeavour to unfold the means
 Which Nature studiously employs to thwart
 This tyranny, summons all the senses each
 To counteract the other and themselves,
 And makes them all, and the objects with which all
 Are conversant, subservient in their turn
 To the great ends of Liberty and Power.
 But this is matter for another Song;
 Here only let me add that my delights,
 Such as they were, were sought insatiably,
 Though 'twas a transport of the outward sense,
 Not of the mind, vivid but not profound:
 Yet was I often greedy in the chace,
 And roam'd from hill to hill, from rock to rock,
 Still craving combinations of new forms,
 New pleasure, wider empire for the sight,
 Proud of its own endowments, and rejoiced
 To lay the inner faculties asleep.
 Amid the turns and counterturns, the strike
 And various trials of our complex being,
 As we grow up, such thralldom of that sense
 Seems hard to shun; and yet I knew a Maid,
 Who, young as I was then, conversed with things
 In higher style, from Appetites like these
 She, gentle Visitant, as well she might
 Was wholly free, far less did critic rules
 Or barren intermeddling subtleties

Perplex her mind; but, wise as Women are
 When genial circumstance hath favor'd them,
 She welcom'd what was given, and craved no more.
 Whatever scene was present to her eyes,
 That was the best, to that she was attuned
 Through her humility and lowliness,
 And through a perfect happiness of soul
 Whose variegated feelings were in this
 Sisters, that they were each some new delight:
 For she was Nature's inmate. Her the birds
 And every flower she met with, could they but
 Have known her, would have lov'd. Methought such charm
 Of sweetness did her presence breathe around
 That all the trees, and all the silent hills
 And everything she look'd on, should have had
 An intimation how she bore herself
 Towards them and to all creatures. God delights
 In such a being; for her common thoughts
 Are piety, her life is blessedness.

Even like this Maid before I was call'd forth
 From the retirement of my native hills
 I lov'd whate'er I saw; nor lightly lov'd,
 But fervently, did never dream of aught
 More grand, more fair, more exquisitely fram'd
 Than those few nooks to which my happy feet
 Were limited. I had not at that time
 Liv'd long enough, nor in the least survived
 The first diviner influence of this world,
 As it appears to unaccustom'd eyes;
 I worshipp'd then among the depth of things
 As my soul bade me; could I then take part
 In aught but admiration, or be pleased
 With anything but humbleness and love;
 I felt, and nothing else; I did not judge,
 I never thought of judging, with the gift
 Of all this glory fill'd and satisfi'd.
 And afterwards, when through the gorgeous Alps
 Roaming, I carried with me the same heart:
 In truth, this degradation, howsoe'r
 Induced, effect in whatsoe'er degree

Of custom, that prepares such wantonness
 As makes the greatest things give way to least,
 Or any other cause which hath been named;
 Or lastly, aggravated by the times,
 Which with their passionate sounds might often make
 The milder minstrelsies of rural scenes
 Inaudible, was transient; I had felt
 Too forcibly, too early in my life,
 Visitings of imaginative power
 For this to last: I shook the habit off
 Entirely and for ever, and again
 In Nature's presence stood, as I stand now,
 A sensitive, and a creative soul.

There are in our existence spots of time,
 Which with distinct pre-eminence retain
 A vivifying Virtue, whence, depress'd
 By false opinion and contentious thought,
 Or aught of heavier or more deadly weight,
 In trivial occupations, and the round
 Of ordinary intercourse, our minds
 Are nourished and invisibly repair'd,
 A virtue by which pleasure is enhanced
 That penetrates, enables us to mount
 When high, more high, and lifts us up when fallen.
 This efficacious spirit chiefly lurks
 Among those passages of life in which
 We have had deepest feeling that the mind
 Is lord and master, and that outward sense
 Is but the obedient servant of her will.
 Such moments worthy of all gratitude,
 Are scatter'd everywhere, taking their date
 From our first childhood: in our childhood even
 Perhaps are most conspicuous. Life with me,
 As far as memory can look back, is full
 Of this beneficent influence. At a time
 When scarcely (I was then not six years old)
 My hand could hold a bridle, with proud hopes
 I mounted, and we rode towards the hills:
 We were a pair of horsemen; honest James
 Was with me, my encourager and guide.

We had not travell'd long, ere some mischance
 Disjoin'd me from my Comrade, and, through fear
 Dismounting, down the rough and stony Moor
 I led my Horse, and stumbling on, at length
 Came to a bottom, where in former times
 A Murderer had been hung in iron chains.
 The Gibbet-mast was moulder'd down, the bones
 And iron case were gone; but on the turf,
 Hard by, soon after that fell deed was wrought
 Some unknown hand had carved the Murderer's name.
 The monumental writing was engraven
 In times long past, and still, from year to year,
 By superstition of the neighbourhood,
 The grass is clear'd away; and to this hour
 The letters are all fresh and visible.
 Faltering, and ignorant where I was, at length
 I chanced to espy those characters inscribed
 On the green sod: forthwith I left the spot
 And, reascending the bare Common, saw
 A naked Pool that lay beneath the hills,
 The Beacon on the summit, and more near,
 A Girl who bore a Pitcher on her head
 And seem'd with difficult steps to force her way
 Against the blowing wind. It was, in truth,
 An ordinary sight; but I should need
 Colours and words that are unknown to man
 To paint the visionary dreariness
 Which, while I look'd all round for my lost guide,
 Did at that time invest the naked Pool,
 The Beacon on the lonely Eminence,
 The Woman, and her garments vex'd and toss'd
 By the strong wind. When, in a blessed season
 With those two dear Ones, to my heart so dear,
 When in the blessed time of early love,
 Long afterwards, I roam'd about
 In daily presence of this very scene,
 Upon the naked pool and dreary crags,
 And on the melancholy Beacon, fell
 The spirt of pleasure and youth's golden gleam;
 And think ye not with radiance more divine
 From these remembrances, and from the power

They left behind? So feeling comes in aid
 Of feeling, and diversity of strength
 Attends us, if but once we have been strong.
 Oh! mystery of Man, from what a depth
 Proceed thy honours! I am lost, but see
 In simple childhood something of the base
 On which thy greatness stands, but this I feel,
 That from thyself it is that thou must give,
 Else never canst receive. The days gone by
 Come back upon me from the dawn almost
 Of life: the hiding-places of my power
 Seem open; I approach, and then they close;
 I see by glimpses now; when age comes on,
 May scarcely see at all, and I would give,
 While yet we may, as far as words can give,
 A substance and a life to what I feel:
 I would enshrine the spirit of the past
 For future restoration. Yet another
 Of these to me affecting incidents
 With which we will conclude.

One Christmas-time,

The day before the holidays began,
 Feverish and tired, and restless, I went forth
 Into the fields, impatient for the sight
 Of those two Horses which should bear us home;
 My Brothers and myself. There was a crag,
 An Eminence, which from the meeting-point
 Of two highways ascending, overlook'd
 At least a long half-mile of those two roads,
 By each of which the expected Steeds might come,
 The choice uncertain. Thither I repair'd
 Up to the highest summit; 'twas a day
 Stormy, and rough, and wild, and on the grass
 I sate, half-shelter'd by a naked wall;
 Upon my right hand was a single sheep
 A whistling hawthorn on my left, and there,
 With those companions at my side, I watch'd,
 Straining my eyes intensely, as the mist
 Gave intermitting prospect of the wood
 And plain beneath. Ere I to School return'd
 That dreary time, ere I had been ten days

A dweller in my Father's House, he died,
 And I and my two Brothers, Orphans then,
 Followed his Body to the Grave. The event
 With all the sorrow which it brought appear'd
 A chastisement; and when I call'd to mind
 That day so lately pass'd, when from the crag
 I look'd in such anxiety of hope,
 With trite reflections of morality,
 Yet in the deepest passion, I bow'd low
 To God, who thus corrected my desires;
 And afterwards, the wind and sleety rain
 And all the business of the elements,
 The single sheep, and the one blasted tree,
 And the bleak music of that old stone wall,
 The noise of wood and water, and the mist
 Which on the line of each of those two Roads
 Advanced in such indisputable shapes,
 All these were spectacles and sounds to which
 I often would repair and thence would drink,
 As at a fountain; and I do not doubt
 That in this later time, when storm and rain
 Beat on my roof at midnight, or by day
 When I am in the woods, unknown to me
 The workings of my spirit thence are brought.

Thou wilt not languish here, O Friend, for whom
 I travel in these dim uncertain ways
 Thou wilt assist me as a pilgrim gone
 In quest of highest truth. Behold me then
 Once more in Nature's presence, thus restored
 Or otherwise, and strengthened once again
 (With memory left of what had been escaped)
 To habits of devoutest sympathy.

BOOK TWELFTH

Same Subject.—(Continued)

FROM nature doth emotion come, and moods
 Of calmness equally are nature's gift,
 This is her glory; these two attributes

Are sister horns that constitute her strength;
 This twofold influence is the sun and shower
 Of all her bounties, both in origin
 And end alike benignant. Hence it is,
 That Genius which exists by interchange
 Of peace and excitation, finds in her
 His best and purest Friend, from her receives
 That energy by which he seeks the truth,
 Is rous'd, aspires, grasps, struggles, wishes, craves,
 From her that happy stillness of the mind
 Which fits him to receive it, when unsought.

Such benefit may souls of humblest frame
 Partake of, each in their degree; 'tis mine
 To speak, what I myself have known and felt
 Sweet task! for words find easy way, inspired
 By gratitude and confidence in truth.
 Long time in search of knowledge desperate,
 I was benighted heart and mind; but now
 On all sides day began to reappear,
 And it was proved indeed that not in vain
 I had been taught to reverence a Power
 That is the very quality and shape
 And image of right reason, that matures
 Her processes by steadfast laws, gives birth
 To no impatient or fallacious hopes,
 No heat of passion or excessive zeal,
 No vain conceits, provokes to no quick turns
 Of self-applauding intellect, but lifts
 The Being into magnanimity;
 Holds up before the mind, intoxicate
 With present objects and the busy dance
 Of things that pass away, a temperate shew
 Of objects that endure, and by this course
 Disposes her, when over-fondly set
 On leaving her incumbrances behind
 To seek in Man, and in the frame of life,
 Social and individual, what there is
 Desirable, affecting, good or fair
 Of kindred permanence, the gifts divine
 And universal, the pervading grace

That hath been, is, and shall be. Above all
 Did Nature bring again that wiser mood
 More deeply re-established in my soul,
 Which, seeing little worthy or sublime
 In what we blazon with the pompous names
 Of power and action, early tutor'd me
 To look with feelings of fraternal love
 Upon those unassuming things, that hold
 A silent station in this beauteous world.

Thus moderated, thus composed, I found
 Once more in Man an object of delight
 Of pure imagination, and of love;
 And, as the horizon of my mind enlarged,
 Again I took the intellectual eye
 For my instructor, studious more to see
 Great Truths, than touch and handle little ones.
 Knowledge was given accordingly; my trust
 Was firmer in the feelings which had stood
 The test of such a trial; clearer far
 My sense of what was excellent and right;
 The promise of the present time retired
 Into its true proportion; sanguine schemes,
 Ambitious virtues pleased me less, I sought
 For good in the familiar face of life
 And built thereon my hopes of good to come.

With settling judgments now of what would last
 And what would disappear, prepared to find
 Ambition, folly, madness in the men
 Who thrust themselves upon this passive world
 As Rulers of the world, to see in these,
 Even when the public welfare is their aim,
 Plans without thought, or bottom'd on false thought
 And false philosophy: having brought to test
 Of solid life and true result the Books
 Of modern Statists, and thereby perceiv'd
 The utter hollowness of what we name
 The wealth of Nations, where alone that wealth
 Is lodged, and how encreased, and having gain'd
 A more judicious knowledge of what makes

The dignity of individual Man,
 Of Man, no composition of the thought,
 Abstraction, shadow, image, but the man
 Of whom we read, the man whom we behold
 With our own eyes; I could not but inquire,
 Not with less interest than heretofore,
 But greater, though in spirit more subdued,
 Why is this glorious Creature to be found
 One only in ten thousand? What one is,
 Why may not many be? What bars are thrown
 By Nature in the way of such a hope?
 Our animal wants and the necessities
 Which they impose, are these the obstacles?
 If not, then others vanish into air.
 Such meditations bred an anxious wish
 To ascertain how much of real worth
 And genuine knowledge, and true power of mind
 Did at this day exist in those who liv'd
 By bodily labour, labour far exceeding
 Their due proportion, under all the weight
 Of that injustice which upon ourselves
 By composition of society
 Ourselves entail. To frame such estimate
 I chiefly look'd (what need to look beyond?)
 Among the natural abodes of men,
 Fields with their rural works, recall'd to mind
 My earliest notices, with these compared
 The observations of my later youth,
 Continued downwards to that very day.

For time had never been in which the throes
 And mighty hopes of Nations, and the stir
 And tumult of the world to me could yield,
 How far soe'er transported and possess'd,
 Full measure of content; but still I craved
 An intermixture of distinct regards
 And truths of individual sympathy
 Nearer ourselves. Such often might be glean'd
 From that great City, else it must have been
 A heart-depressing wilderness indeed,
 Full soon to me a wearisome abode;

But much was wanting; therefore did I turn
 To you, ye Pathways, and ye lonely Roads
 Sought you enrich'd with everything I prized,
 With human kindness and with Nature's joy.

Oh! next to one dear state of bliss, vouchsafed
 Alas! to few in this untoward world,
 The bliss of walking daily in Life's prime
 Through field or forest with the Maid we love,
 While yet our hearts are young, while yet we breathe
 Nothing but happiness, living in some place,
 Deep Vale, or anywhere, the home of both,
 From which it would be misery to stir;
 Oh! next to such enjoyment of our youth,
 In my esteem, next to such dear delight
 Was that of wandering on from day to day
 Where I could meditate in peace, and find
 The knowledge which I love, and teach the sound
 Of Poet's music to strange fields and groves,
 Converse with men, where if we meet a face
 We almost meet a friend, on naked Moors
 With long, long ways before, by Cottage Bench
 Or Well-spring where the weary Traveller rests.

I love a public road: few sights there are
 That please me more; such object hath had power
 O'er my imagination since the dawn
 Of childhood, when its disappearing line,
 Seen daily afar off, on one bare steep
 Beyond the limits which my feet had trod
 Was like a guide into eternity,
 At least to things unknown and without bound.
 Even something of the grandeur which invests
 The Mariner who sails the roaring sea
 Through storm and darkness early in my mind
 Surrounded, too, the Wanderers of the Earth,
 Grandeur as much, and loveliness far more;
 Awed have I been by strolling Bedlamites,
 From many other uncouth Vagrants pass'd
 In fear, have walk'd with quicker step; but why
 Take note of this? When I began to inquire,
 To watch and question those I met, and held

Familiar talk with them, the lonely roads
 Were schools to me in which I daily read
 With most delight the passions of mankind,
 There saw into the depth of human souls,
 Souls that appear to have no depth at all
 To vulgar eyes. And now convinced at heart
 How little that to which alone we give
 The name of education hath to do
 With real feeling and just sense, how vain
 A correspondence with the talking world
 Proves to the most, and call'd to make good search
 If man's estate, by doom of Nature yoked
 With toil, is therefore yoked with ignorance,
 If virtue be indeed so hard to rear,
 And intellectual strength so rare a boon
 I prized such walks still more; for there I found
 Hope to my hope, and to my pleasure peace,
 And steadiness; and healing and repose
 To every angry passion. There I heard,
 From mouths of lowly men and of obscure
 A tale of honour; sounds in unison
 With loftiest promises of good and fair.

There are who think that strong affections, love
 Known by whatever name, is falsely deem'd
 A gift, to use a term which they would use,
 Of vulgar Nature, that its growth requires
 Retirement, leisure, language purified
 By manners thoughtful and elaborate,
 That whoso feels such passion in excess
 Must live within the very light and air
 Of elegances that are made by man.
 True is it, where oppression worse than death
 Salutes the Being at his birth, where grace
 Of culture hath been utterly unknown,
 And labour in excess and poverty
 From day to day pre-occupy the ground
 Of the affections, and to Nature's self
 Oppose a deeper nature, there indeed,
 Love cannot be; not does it easily thrive
 In cities, where the human heart is sick,

And the eye feeds it not, and cannot feed:
 Thus far, no further, is that inference good.
 Yes, in those wanderings deeply did I feel
 How we mislead each other, above all
 How Books mislead us, looking for their fame
 To judgments of the wealthy Few, who see
 By artificial lights, how they debase
 The Many for the pleasure of those Few
 Effeminately level down the truth
 To certain general notions for the sake
 Of being understood at once, or else
 Through want of better knowledge in the men
 Who frame them, flattering thus our self-conceit
 With pictures that ambitiously set forth
 The differences, the outward marks by which
 Society has parted man from man,
 Neglectful of the universal heart.

Here calling up to mind what then I saw
 A youthful Traveller, and see daily now
 Before me in my rural neighbourhood,
 Here might I pause, and bend in reverence
 To Nature, and the power of human minds,
 To men as they are men within themselves.
 How oft high service is perform'd within,
 When all the external man is rude in shew,
 Not like a temple rich with pomp and gold
 But a mere mountain-Chapel such as shields
 Its simple worshippers from sun and shower.
 Of these, said I, shall be my Song; of these,
 If future years mature me for the task,
 Will I record the praises, making Verse
 Deal boldly with substantial things, in truth
 And sanctity of passion, speak of these
 That justice may be done, obeisance paid
 Where it is due: thus haply shall I teach,
 Inspire, through unadulterated ears
 Pour rapture, tenderness, and hope, my theme
 No other than the very heart of man
 As found among the best of those who live
 Not unexalted by religious hope,

Nor uninformed by books, good books though few,
 In Nature's presence: thence may I select
 Sorrow that is not sorrow, but delight,
 And miserable love that is not pain
 To hear of, for the glory that redounds
 Therefrom to human kind and what we are.
 Be mine to follow with no timid step
 Where knowledge leads me; it shall be my pride
 That I have dared to tread this holy ground,
 Speaking no dream but things oracular,
 Matter not lightly to be heard by those
 Who to the letter of the outward promise
 Do read the invisible soul, by men adroit
 In speech and for communion with the world
 Accomplish'd, minds whose faculties are then
 Most active when they are most eloquent
 And elevated most when most admired.
 Men may be found of other mold than these,
 Who are their own upholders, to themselves
 Encouragement, and energy and will,
 Expressing liveliest thoughts in lively words
 As native passion dictates. Others, too,
 There are among the walks of homely life
 Still higher, men for contemplation framed,
 Shy, and unpractis'd in the strife of phrase,
 Meek men, whose very souls perhaps would sink
 Beneath them, summon'd to such intercourse:
 Theirs is the language of the heavens, the power,
 The thought, the image, and the silent joy;
 Words are but under-agents in their souls;
 When they are grasping with their greatest strength
 They do not breathe among them: this I speak
 In gratitude to God, who feeds our hearts
 For his own service, knoweth, loveth us
 When we are unregarded by the world.

Also about this time did I receive
 Convictions still more strong than heretofore
 Not only that the inner frame is good,
 And graciously composed, but that no less
 Nature through all conditions hath a power

THE PRELUDE

To consecrate, if we have eyes to see,
The outside of her creatures, and to breathe
Grandeur upon the very humblest face
Of human life. I felt that the array
Of outward circumstance and visible form
Is to the pleasure of the human mind
What passion makes it, that meanwhile the forms
Of Nature have a passion in themselves
That intermingles with those works of man
To which she summons him, although the works
Be mean, have nothing lofty of their own;
And that the genius of the Poet hence
May boldly take his way among mankind
Wherever Nature leads, that he hath stood
By Nature's side among the men of old,
And so shall stand for ever. Dearest Friend,
Forgive me if I say that I, who long
Had harbour'd reverentially a thought
That Poets, even as Prophets, each with each
Connected in a mighty scheme of truth,
Have each for his peculiar dower, a sense
By which he is enabled to perceive
Something unseen before; forgive me, Friend,
If I, the meanest of this Band, had hope
That unto me had also been vouchsafed
An influx, that in some sort I possess'd
A privilege, and that a work of mine,
Proceeding from the depth of untaught things,
Enduring and creative, might become
A power like one of Nature's. To such mood,
Once above all, a Traveller at that time
Upon the Plain of Sarum was I raised;
There on the pastoral Downs without a track
To guide me, or along the bare white roads
Lengthening in solitude their dreary line,
While through those vestiges of ancient times
I ranged, and by the solitude overcome,
I had a reverie and saw the past,
Saw multitudes of men, and here and there,
A single Briton in his wolf-skin vest
With shield and stone-axe, stride across the Wold;

The voice of spears was heard, the rattling spear
 Shaken by arms of mighty bone, in strength
 Long moulder'd of barbaric majesty.
 I called upon the darkness; and it took,
 A midnight darkness seem'd to come and take
 All objects from my sight; and lo! again
 The desert visible by dismal flames!
 It is the sacrificial Altar, fed
 With living men, how deep the groans, the voice
 Of those in the gigantic wicker thrills
 Throughout the region far and near, pervades
 The monumental hillocks; and the pomp
 Is for both worlds, the living and the dead.
 At other moments, for through that wide waste
 Three summer days I roam'd, when 'twas my chance
 To have before me on the dreary Plain
 Lines, circles, mounts, a mystery of shapes
 Such as in many quarters yet survive,
 With intricate profusion figuring o'er
 The untill'd ground, the work, as some divine,
 Of infant science, imitative forms
 By which the Druids covertly express'd
 Their knowledge of the heavens, and imaged forth
 The constellations, I was gently charm'd,
 Albeit with an antiquarian's dream,
 I saw the Bearded Teachers, with white wands
 Uplifted, pointing to the starry sky
 Alternately, and Plain below, while breath
 Of music seem'd to guide them, and the Waste
 Was chear'd with stillness and a pleasant sound.

This for the past, and things that may be view'd
 Or fancied, in the obscurities of time.
 Nor is it, Friend, unknown to thee, at least
 Thyself delighted, who for my delight
 Hast said, perusing some imperfect verse
 Which in that lonesome journey was composed,
 That also then I must have exercised
 Upon the vulgar forms of present things
 And actual world of our familiar days,
 A higher power, have caught from them a tone,

An image, and a character, by books
 Not hitherto reflected. Call we this
 But a persuasion taken up by Thee
 In friendship; yet the mind is to herself
 Witness and judge, and I remember well
 That in life's every-day appearances
 I seem'd about this period to have sight
 Of a new world, a world, too, that was fit
 To be transmitted and made visible
 To other eyes, as having for its base
 That whence our dignity originates,
 That which both gives it being and maintains
 A balance, an ennobling interchange
 Of action from within and from without,
 The excellence, pure spirit, and best power
 Both of the object seen, and eye that sees.

BOOK THIRTEENTH

Conclusion

IN one of these excursions, travelling then
 Through Wales on foot, and with a youthful Friend,
 I left Bethgelert's huts at couching-time,
 And westward took my way to see the sun
 Rise from the top of Snowdon. Having reach'd
 The Cottage at the Mountain's foot, we there
 Rouz'd up the Shepherd, who by ancient right
 Of office is the Stranger's usual guide;
 And after short refreshment sallied forth.

It was a Summer's night, a close warm night,
 Wan, dull and glaring, with a dripping mist
 Low-hung and thick that cover'd all the sky,
 Half threatening storm and rain; but on we went
 Uncheck'd, being full of heart and having faith
 In our tried Pilot. Little could we see
 Hemm'd round on every side with fog and damp,
 And, after ordinary travellers' chat
 With our Conductor, silently we sank

Each into commerce with his private thoughts:
 Thus did we breast the ascent, and by myself
 Was nothing either seen or heard the while
 Which took me from my musings, save that once
 The Shepherd's Cur did to his own great joy
 Unearth a hedgehog in the mountain crags
 Round which he made a barking turbulent.
 This small adventure, for even such it seemed
 In that wild place and at the dead of night,
 Being over and forgotten, on we wound
 In silence as before. With forehead bent
 Earthward, as if in opposition set
 Against an enemy, I panted up
 With eager pace, and no less eager thoughts.
 Thus might we wear perhaps an hour away,
 Ascending at loose distance each from each,
 And I, as chanced, the foremost of the Band;
 When at my feet the ground appear'd to brighten,
 And with a step or two seem'd brighter still;
 Nor had I time to ask the cause of this,
 For instantly a Light upon the turf
 Fell like a flash: I looked about, and lo!
 The Moon stood naked in the Heavens, at height
 Immense above my head, and on the shore
 I found myself of a huge sea of mist,
 Which, meek and silent, rested at my feet:
 A hundred hills their dusky backs upheaved
 All over this still Ocean, and beyond,
 Far, far beyond, the vapours shot themselves,
 In headlands, tongues, and promontory shapes,
 Into the Sea, the real Sea, that seem'd
 To dwindle, and give up its majesty,
 Usurp'd upon as far as sight could reach.
 Meanwhile, the Moon look'd down upon this shew
 In single glory, and we stood, the mist
 Touching our very feet; and from the shore
 At distance not the third part of a mile
 Was a blue chasm; a fracture in the vapour,
 A deep and gloomy breathing-place through which
 Mounted the roars of waters, torrents, streams
 Innumerable, roaring with one voice.

The universal spectacle throughout
 Was shaped for admiration and delight,
 Grand in itself alone, but in that breach
 Through which the homeless voice of waters rose,
 That dark deep thoroughfare had Nature lodg'd
 The Soul, the Imagination of the whole.

A meditation rose in me that night
 Upon the lonely Mountain when the scene
 Has pass'd away, and it appear'd to me
 The perfect image of a mighty Mind,
 Of one that feeds upon infinity,
 That is exalted by an underpresence,
 The sense of God, or whatsoe'er is dim
 Or vast in its own being, above all
 One function of such mind had Nature there
 Exhibited by putting forth, and that
 With circumstance most awful and sublime,
 That domination which she oftentimes
 Exerts upon the outward face of things,
 So moulds them, and endues, abstracts, combines,
 Or by abrupt and unhabitual influence
 Doth make one object so impress itself
 Upon all others, and pervade them so
 That even the grossest minds must see and hear
 And cannot chuse but feel. The Power which these
 Acknowledge when thus moved, which Nature thus
 Thrusts forth upon the senses, is the express
 Resemblance, in the fulness of its strength
 Made visible, a genuine Counterpart
 And Brother of the glorious faculty
 Which higher minds bear with them as their own.
 That is the very spirit in which they deal
 With all the objects of the universe;
 They from their native selves can send abroad
 Like transformations, for themselves create
 A like existence, and, whene'er it is
 Created for them, catch it by an instinct;
 Them the enduring and the transient both
 Serve to exalt; they build up greatest things
 From least suggestions, ever on the watch,

Willing to work and to be wrought upon,
 They need not extraordinary calls
 To rouse them, in a world of life they live,
 By sensible impressions not enthrall'd,
 But quicken'd, rous'd, and made thereby more apt
 To hold communion with the invisible world.
 Such minds are truly from the Deity,
 For they are Powers; and hence the highest bliss
 That can be known is theirs, the consciousness
 Of whom they are habitually infused
 Through every image, and through every thought,
 And all impressions; hence religion, faith,
 And endless occupation for the soul
 Whether discursive or intuitive;
 Hence sovereignty within and peace at will.
 Emotion which best foresight need not fear
 Most worthy then of trust when most intense.
 Hence cheerfulness in every act of life
 Hence truth in moral judgements and delight
 That fails not in the external universe.

Oh! who is he that hath his whole life long
 Preserved, enlarged, this freedom in himself?
 For this alone is genuine Liberty:
 Witness, ye Solitudes! where I received
 My earliest visitations, careless then
 Of what was given me, and where now I roam,
 A meditative, oft a suffering Man,
 And yet, I trust, with undiminish'd powers,
 Witness, whatever falls my better mind,
 Revolving with the accidents of life,
 May have sustain'd, that, howsoe'er misled,
 I never, in the quest of right and wrong,
 Did tamper with myself from private aims;
 Nor was in any of my hopes the dupe
 Of selfish passions; nor did wilfully
 Yield ever to mean cares and low pursuits;
 But rather did with jealousy shrink back
 From every combination that might aid
 The tendency, too potent in itself,
 Of habit to enslave the mind, I mean

Oppress it by the laws of vulgar sense,
 And substitute a universe of death,
 The falsest of all worlds, in place of that
 Which is divine and true. To fear and love,
 To love as first and chief, for there fear ends,
 Be this ascribed; to early intercourse,
 In presence of sublime and lovely forms,
 With the adverse principles of pain and joy,
 Evil as one is rashly named by those
 Who know not what they say. By love, for here
 Do we begin and end, all grandeur comes,
 All truth and beauty, from pervading love,
 That gone, we are but dust. Behold the fields
 In balmy spring-time, full of rising flowers
 And happy creatures; see that Pair, the Lamb
 And the Lamb's Mother, and their tender ways
 Shall touch thee to the heart; in some green bower
 Rest, and be not alone, but have thou there
 The One who is thy choice of all the world,
 There linger, lull'd and lost, and rapt away,
 Be happy to thy fill; thou call'st this love
 And so it is, but there is higher love
 Than this, a love that comes into the heart
 With awe and a diffusive sentiment;
 Thy love is human merely; this proceeds
 More from the brooding Soul, and is divine.

This love more intellectual cannot be
 Without Imagination, which, in truth
 Is but another name for absolute strength
 And clearest insight, amplitude of mind,
 And reason in her most exalted mood.
 This faculty hath been the moving soul
 Of our long labour: we have traced the stream
 From darkness, and the very place of birth
 In its blind cavern, whence is faintly heard
 The sound of waters; follow'd it to light
 And open day, accompanied its course
 Among the ways of Nature, afterwards
 Lost sight of it bewilder'd and engulph'd,
 Then given it greeting, as it rose once more

With strength, reflecting in its solemn breast
 The works of man and face of human life,
 And lastly, from its progress have we drawn
 The feeling of life endless, the great thought
 By which we live, Infinity and God.
 Imagination having been our theme,
 So also hath that intellectual love,
 For they are each in each, and cannot stand
 Dividually.—Here must thou be, O Man!
 Strength to thyself; no Helper hast thou here;
 Here keepest thou thy individual state:
 No other can divide with thee this work,
 No secondary hand can intervene
 To fashion this ability; 'tis thine,
 The prime and vital principle is thine
 In the recesses of thy nature, far
 From any reach of outward fellowship,
 Else is not thine at all. But joy to him,
 Oh, joy to him who here hath sown, hath laid
 Here the foundations of his future years!
 For all that friendship, all that love can do,
 All that a darling countenance can look
 Or dear voice utter to complete the man,
 Perfect him, made imperfect in himself,
 All shall be his: and he whose soul hath risen
 Up to the height of feeling intellect
 Shall want no humbler tenderness, his heart
 Be tender as a nursing Mother's heart;
 Of female softness shall his life be full,
 Of little loves and delicate desires,
 Mild interests and gentlest sympathies.

Child of my Parents! Sister of my Soul!
 Elsewhere have streams of gratitude been breath'd
 To thee for all the early tenderness
 Which I from thee imbibed. And true it is
 That later seasons owed to thee no less;
 For, spite of thy sweet influence and the touch
 Of other kindred hands that open'd out
 The springs of tender thought in infancy,
 And spite of all which singly I had watch'd

Of elegance, and each minuter charm
 In nature and in life, still to the last
 Even to the very going out of youth,
 The period which our Story now hath reach'd,
 I too exclusively esteem'd that love,
 And sought that beauty, which, as Milton sings,
 Hath terror in it. Thou didst soften down
 This over-sternness; but for thee, sweet Friend,
 My soul, too reckless of mild grace, had been
 Far longer what by Nature it was framed,
 Longer retain'd its countenance severe,
 A rock with torrents roaring, with the clouds
 Familiar, and a favourite of the Stars:
 But thou didst plant its crevices with flowers,
 Hang it with shrubs that twinkle in the breeze,
 And teach the little birds to build their nests
 And warble in its chambers. At a time
 When Nature, destined to remain so long
 Foremost in my affections, had fallen back
 Into a second place, well pleas'd to be
 A handmaid to a nobler than herself,
 When every day brought with it some new sense
 Of exquisite regard for common things,
 And all the earth was budding with these gifts
 Of more refined humanity, thy breath,
 Dear Sister, was a kind of gentler spring
 That went before my steps.

With such a theme,

Coleridge! with this my argument, of thee
 Shall I be silent? O most loving Soul!
 Placed on this earth to love and understand,
 And from thy presence shed the light of love?
 Shall I be mute ere thou be spoken of?
 Thy gentle Spirit to my heart of hearts
 Did also find its way; and thus the life
 Of all things and the mighty unity
 In all which we behold, and feel, and are,
 Admitted more habitually a mild
 Interposition, and closelier gathering thoughts
 Of man and his concerns, such as become
 A human Creature, be he who he may!

Poet, or destined for a humbler name;
 And so the deep enthusiastic joy,
 The rapture of the Hallelujah sent
 From all that breathes and is, was chasten'd, stemm'd
 And balanced by a Reason which indeed
 Is reason; duty and pathetic truth;
 And God and Man divided, as they ought,
 Between them the great system of the world
 Where Man is sphered, and which God animates.

And now, O Friend! this history is brought
 To its appointed close: the discipline
 And consummation of the Poet's mind,
 In everything that stood most prominent,
 Have faithfully been pictured; we have reach'd
 The time (which was our object from the first)
 When we may, not presumptuously, I hope,
 Suppose my powers so far confirmed, and such
 My knowledge, as to make me capable
 Of building up a work that should endure.
 Yet much hath been omitted, as need was;
 Of Books how much! and even of the other wealth
 That is collected among woods and fields,
 Far more: for Nature's secondary grace,
 That outward illustration which is hers,
 Hath hitherto been barely touched upon,
 The charm more superficial, and yet sweet
 Which from her works finds way, contemplated
 As they hold forth a genuine counterpart
 And softening mirror of the moral world.

Yes, having track'd the main essential Power,
 Imagination, up her way sublime,
 In turn might Fancy also be pursued
 Through all her transmigrations, till she too
 Was purified, had learn'd to ply her craft
 By judgment steadied. Then might we return
 And in the Rivers and the Groves behold
 Another face, might hear them from all sides
 Calling upon the more instructed mind
 To link their images with subtle skill

THE PRELUDE

Sometimes, and by elaborate research
With forms and definite appearances
Of human life, presenting them sometimes
To the involuntary sympathy
Of our internal being, satisfied
And soothed with a conception of delight
Where meditation cannot come, which thought
Could never heighten. Above all how much
Still nearer to ourselves we overlook
In human nature and that marvellous world
As studied first in my own heart, and then
In life among the passions of mankind
And qualities commix'd and modified
By the infinite varieties and shades
Of individual character. Therein
It was for me (this justice bids me say)
No useless preparation to have been
The pupil of a public School, and forced
In hardy independence, to stand up
Amid conflicting passions, and the shock
Of various tempers, to endure and note
What was not understood though known to be;
Among the mysteries of love and hate,
Honour and shame, looking to right and left,
Uncheck'd by innocence too delicate
And moral notions too intolerant,
Sympathies too contracted. Hence, when call'd
To take a station among Men, the step
Was easier, the transition more secure,
More profitable also; for the mind
Learns from such timely exercise to keep
In wholesome separation the two natures,
The one that feels, the other that observes.

Yet one word more of personal circumstance,
Not needless, as it seems, be added here.
Since I withdrew unwillingly from France,
The Story hath demanded less regard
To time and place; and where I lived, and how
Hath been no longer scrupulously mark'd.
Three years, until a permanent abode

Receiv'd me with that Sister of my heart
 Who ought by rights the dearest to have been
 Conspicuous through this biographic Verse,
 Star seldom utterly conceal'd from view,
 I led an undomestic Wanderer's life,
 In London chiefly was my home, and thence
 Excursively, as personal friendships, chance
 Or inclination led, or slender means
 Gave leave, I roam'd about from place to place
 Tarrying in pleasant nooks, wherever found
 Through England or through Wales. A Youth (he bore
 The name of Calvert; it shall live, if words
 Of mine can give it life,) without respect
 To prejudice or custom, having hope
 That I had some endowments by which good
 Might be promoted, in his last decay
 From his own Family withdrawing part
 Of no redundant Patrimony, did
 By a Bequest sufficient for my needs
 Enable me to pause for choice, and walk
 At large and unrestrain'd, nor damp'd too soon
 By mortal cares. Himself no Poet, yet
 Far less a common Spirit of the world,
 He deem'd that my pursuits and labours lay
 Apart from all that leads to wealth, or even
 Perhaps to necessary maintenance,
 Without some hazard to the finer sense;
 He clear'd a passage for me, and the stream
 Flowed in the bent of Nature.

Having now

Told what best merits mention, further pains
 Our present purpose seems not to require,
 And I have other tasks. Call back to mind
 The mood in which this poem was begun,
 O Friend! the termination of my course
 Is nearer now, much nearer; yet even then
 In that distraction and intense desire
 I said unto the life which I had lived,
 Where art thou? Hear I not a voice from thee
 Which 'tis reproach to hear? Anon I rose
 As if on wings, and saw beneath me stretch'd

THE PRELUDE

Vast prospect of the world which I had been
And was; and hence this Song, which like a lark
I have protracted, in the unwearied Heavens
Singing, and often with more plaintive voice
Attempered to the sorrows of the earth;
Yet centring all in love, and in the end
All gratulant if rightly understood.

Whether to me shall be allotted life,
And with life power to accomplish aught of worth
Sufficient to excuse me in men's sight
For having given this Record of myself,
Is all uncertain: but, beloved Friend,
When, looking back thou seest in clearer view
Than any sweetest sight of yesterday
That summer when on Quantock's grassy Hills
Far ranging, and among her sylvan Combs,
Thou in delicious words, with happy heart,
Didst speak the Vision of that Ancient Man,
The bright-eyed Mariner, and rueful woes
Didst utter of the Lady Christabel;
And I, associate with such labour, walk'd
Murmuring of him who, joyous hap! was found,
After the perils of his moonlight ride
Near the loud Waterfall; or her who sate
In misery near the miserable Thorn;
When thou dost to that summer turn thy thoughts,
And hast before thee all which then we were,
To thee, in memory of that happiness
It will be known, by thee at least, my Friend,
Felt, that the history of a Poet's mind
Is labour not unworthy of regard:
To thee the work shall justify itself.

The last and later portions of this Gift
Which I for Thee design, have been prepared
In times which have from those wherein we first
Together wanton'd in wild Poesy,
Differ'd thus far, that they have been, my Friend,
Times of much sorrow, of a private grief
Keen and enduring, which the frame of mind

That in this meditative History
 Hath been described, more deeply makes me feel;
 Yet likewise hath enabled me to bear
 More firmly; and a comfort now, a hope,
 One of the dearest which this life can give,
 Is mine; that Thou art near, and wilt be soon
 Restored to us in renovated health;
 When, after the first mingling of our tears,
 'Mong other consolations we may find
 Some pleasure from this Offering of my love.

Oh! yet a few short years of useful life,
 And all will be complete, thy race be run,
 Thy monument of glory will be raised.
 Then, though, too weak to tread the ways of truth,
 This Age fall back to old idolatry,
 Though men return to servitude as fast
 As the tide ebbs, to ignominy and shame
 By Nations sink together, we shall still
 Find solace in the knowledge which we have,
 Bless'd with true happiness if we may be
 United helpers forward of a day
 Of firmer trust, joint-labourers in a work
 (Should Providence such grace to us vouchsafe)
 Of their redemption, surely yet to come.
 Prophets of Nature, we to them will speak
 A lasting inspiration, sanctified
 By reason and by truth; what we have loved;
 Others will love; and we may teach them how;
 Instruct them how the mind of man becomes
 A thousand times more beautiful than the earth
 On which he dwells, above this Frame of things
 (Which, 'mid all revolution in the hopes
 And fears of men, doth still remain unchanged)
 In beauty exalted, as it is itself
 Of substance and of fabric more divine.

POEMS IN TWO VOLUMES

1807

Poems, In Two Volumes, by William Wordsworth, Author of The Lyrical Ballads. . . . London: Printed for Longman, Hurst, Rees, and Orme, Paternoster-Row. 1807.

All but twelve of the poems from the two volumes have been included, though the *Memorials of a Tour in Scotland, 1803*, and the sonnet *October 1803* have been arranged as a separate group on pp. 637 ff.

In the Fenwick Note on the *Ode, Intimations of Immortality*, Wordsworth says:

Nothing was more difficult for me in childhood than to admit the notion of death as a state applicable to my own being. . . . But it was not so much from [feelings] of animal vivacity that *my* difficulty came as from a sense of the indomitableness of the spirit within me. I used to brood over the stories of Enoch and Elijah, and almost to persuade myself that, whatever might become of others, I should be translated, in something of the same way, to heaven. With a feeling congenial to this, I was often unable to think of external things as having external existence, and I communed with all that I saw as something not apart from, but inherent in, my own immaterial nature. Many times while going to school have I grasped at a wall or tree to recall myself from this abyss of idealism to the reality. At that time I was afraid of such processes. In later periods of life I have deplored, as we have all reason to do, a subjugation of an opposite character, and have rejoiced over the remembrances, as is expressed in the lines—

‘Obstinate questionings
Of sense and outward things,
Fallings from us, vanishings;’ etc.

The Journal of Dorothy Wordsworth notes that the ode was begun on 27 March 1802, and in the Fenwick Note Wordsworth says that “two years at least passed between the writing of the four first stanzas and the remaining part.”

POEMS IN TWO VOLUMES

Louisa

I MET Louisa in the shade;
And, having seen that lovely Maid,
Why should I fear to say
That she is ruddy, fleet, and strong;
And down the rocks can leap along,
Like rivulets in May?

And she hath smiles to earth unknown;
Smiles, that with motion of their own
Do spread, and sink, and rise;
That come and go with endless play,
And ever, as they pass away,
Are hidden in her eyes.

She loves her fire, her Cottage-home;
Yet o'er the moorland will she roam
In weather rough and bleak;
And when against the wind she strains,
Oh! might I kiss the mountain rains
That sparkle on her cheek.

Take all that's mine "beneath the moon,"
If I with her but half a noon
May sit beneath the walls
Of some old cave, or mossy nook,
When up she winds along the brook,
To hunt the waterfalls.

SHE was a Phantom of delight
When first she gleam'd upon my sight;
A lovely Apparition, sent
To be a moment's ornament;

Her eyes as stars of Twilight fair;
 Like Twilight's, too, her dusky hair;
 But all things else about her drawn
 From May-time and the chearful Dawn;
 A dancing Shape, an Image gay,
 To haunt, to startle, and way-lay.

I saw her upon nearer view,
 A Spirit, yet a Woman too!
 Her household motions light and free,
 And steps of virgin liberty;
 A countenance in which did meet
 Sweet records, promises as sweet;
 A Creature not too bright or good
 For human nature's daily food;
 For transient sorrows, simple wiles,
 Praise, blame, love, kisses, tears, and smiles.

And now I see with eye serene
 The very pulse of the machine;
 A Being breathing thoughtful breath;
 A Traveller betwixt life and death;
 The reason firm, the temperate will,
 Endurance, foresight, strength and skill;
 A perfect Woman; nobly plann'd,
 To warn, to comfort, and command;
 And yet a Spirit still, and bright
 With something of an angel light.

The Redbreast and the Butterfly

ART thou the Bird whom Man loves best,
 The pious Bird with the scarlet breast,
 Our little English Robin;
 The Bird that comes about our doors
 When Autumn winds are sobbing?
 Art thou the Peter of Norway Boors?
 Their Thomas in Finland,
 And Russia far inland?
 The Bird, whom by some name or other

All men who know thee call their Brother,
 The Darling of Children and men?
 Could Father Adam open his eyes,
 And see this sight beneath the skies,
 He'd wish to close them again.
 If the Butterfly knew but his friend
 Hither his flight he would bend,
 And find his way to me
 Under the branches of the tree:
 In and out, he darts about;
 His little heart is throbbing:
 Can this be the Bird, to man so good,
 Our consecrated Robin!
 That, after their bewildering,
 Did cover with leaves the little children,
 So painfully in the wood?

What ail'd thee Robin that thou could'st pursue
 A beautiful Creature,
 That is gentle by nature?
 Beneath the summer sky
 From flower to flower let him fly;
 'Tis all that he wishes to do.
 The Chearer Thou of our in-door sadness,
 He is the Friend of our summer gladness:
 What hinders, then, that ye should be
 Playmates in the sunny weather,
 And fly about in the air together?
 Like the hues of thy breast
 His beautiful wings in crimson are drest,
 A brother he seems of thine own:
 If thou would'st be happy in thy nest,
 O pious Bird! whom Man loves best,
 Love him, or leave him alone!

The Sailor's Mother

ONE morning (raw it was and wet,
 A foggy day in winter time)
 A Woman in the road I met,

Not old, though something past her prime:
Majestic in her person, tall and straight;
And like a Roman matron's was her mien and gait.

The ancient Spirit is not dead;
Old times, thought I, are breathing there;
Proud was I that my country bred
Such strength, a dignity so fair:
She begg'd an alms, like one in poor estate;
I look'd at her again, nor did my pride abate.

When from these lofty thoughts I woke,
With the first word I had to spare
I said to her, "Beneath your Cloak
What's that which on your arm you bear?"
She answer'd soon as she the question heard,
"A simple burthen, Sir, a little Singing-bird."

And, thus continuing, she said,
"I had a Son, who many a day
Sail'd on the seas; but he is dead;
In Denmark he was cast away;
And I have been as far as Hull, to see
What clothes he might have left, or other property.

The Bird and Cage they both were his;
'Twas my Son's Bird; and neat and trim
He kept it: many voyages
This Singing-bird hath gone with him;
When last he sail'd he left the Bird behind;
As it might be, perhaps, from bodings of his mind.

He to a Fellow-lodger's care
Had left it, to be watch'd and fed,
Till he came back again; and there
I found it when my Son was dead;
And now, God help me for my little wit!
I trail it with me, Sir! he took so much delight in it."

*To the Small Celandine*¹

PANSIES, Lilies, Kingcups, Daisies,
 Let them live upon their praises;
 Long as there's a sun that sets
 Primroses will have their glory;
 Long as there are Violets,
 They will have a place in story:
 There's a flower that shall be mine,
 'Tis the little Celandine.

Eyes of some men travel far
 For the finding of a star;
 Up and down the heavens they go,
 Men that keep a mighty rout!
 I'm as great as they, I trow,
 Since the day I found thee out,
 Little flower!—I'll make a stir
 Like a great Astronomer.

Modest, yet withal an Elf
 Bold, and lavish of thyself,
 Since we needs must first have met
 I have seen thee, high and low,
 Thirty years or more, and yet
 'Twas a face I did not know;
 Thou hast now, go where I may,
 Fifty greetings in a day.

Ere a leaf is on a bush,
 In the time before the Thrush
 Has a thought about it's nest,
 Thou wilt come with half a call,
 Spreading out thy glossy breast
 Like a careless Prodigal;
 Telling tales about the sun,
 When we've little warmth, or none.

¹ Common Pilewort.

Poets, vain men in their mood!
 Travel with the multitude;
 Never heed them; I aver
 That they all are wanton Wooers;
 But the thrifty Cottager,
 Who stirs little out of doors,
 Joys to spy thee near her home,
 Spring is coming, Thou are come!

Comfort have thou of thy merit,
 Kindly, unassuming Spirit!
 Careless of thy neighbourhood,
 Thou dost shew thy pleasant face
 On the moor, and in the wood,
 In the lane—there's not a place,
 Howsoever mean it be,
 But 'tis good enough for thee.

Ill befall the yellow Flowers,
 Children of the flaring hours!
 Buttercups, that will be seen,
 Whether we will see or no;
 Others, too, of lofty mien;
 They have done as worldlings do,
 Taken praise that should be thine,
 Little, humble Celandine!

Prophet of delight and mirth,
 Scorn'd and slighted upon earth!
 Herald of a mighty band,
 Of a joyous train ensuing,
 Singing at my heart's command,
 In the lanes my thoughts pursuing,
 I will sing, as doth behove,
 Hymns in praise of what I love!

To the Same Flower

PLEASURES newly found are sweet
 When they lie about our feet:
 February last my heart

First at sight of thee was glad;
All unheard of as thou art,
Thou must needs, I think, have had,
Celandine! and long ago,
Praise of which I nothing know.

I have not a doubt but he,
Whosoe'er the man might be,
Who the first with pointed rays,
(Workman worthy to be sainted)
Set the Sign-board in a blaze,
When the risen sun he painted,
Took the fancy from a glance
At thy glittering countenance.

Soon as gentle breezes bring
News of winter's vanishing,
And the children build their bowers,
Sticking 'kerchief-plots of mold
All about with full-blown flowers,
Thick as sheep in shepherd's fold!
With the proudest Thou art there,
Mantling in the tiny square.

Often have I sigh'd to measure
By myself a lonely pleasure,
Sigh'd to think, I read a book
Only read perhaps by me;
Yet I long could overlook
Thy bright coronet and Thee,
And thy arch and wily ways,
And thy store of other praise.

Blithe of heart, from week to week
Thou dost play at hide-and-seek;
While the patient Primrose sits
Like a Beggar in the cold,
Thou, a Flower of wiser wits,
Slipp'st into thy shelter'd hold;
Bright as any of the train
When ye all are out again.

Thou art not beyond the moon,
But a thing "beneath our shoon;"
Let, as old Magellen did,
Others roam about the sea;
Build who will a pyramid;
Praise it is enough for me,
If there be but three or four
Who will love my little Flower.

Character of the Happy Warrior

WHO is the happy Warrior? Who is he
Whom every Man in arms should wish to be?
—It is the generous Spirit, who, when brought
Among the tasks of real life, hath wrought
Upon the plan that pleased his childish thought:
Whose high endeavours are an inward light
That make the path before him always bright:
Who, with a natural instinct to discern
What knowledge can perform, is diligent to learn;
Abides by this resolve, and stops not there,
But makes his moral being his prime care;
Who, doom'd to go in company with Pain,
And Fear, and Bloodshed, miserable train!
Turns his necessity to glorious gain;
In face of these doth exercise a power
Which is our human-nature's highest dower;
Controls them and subdues, transmutes, bereaves
Of their bad influence, and their good receives;
By objects, which might force the soul to abate
Her feeling, render'd more compassionate;
Is placable because occasions rise
So often that demand such sacrifice;
More skilful in self-knowledge, even more pure,
As tempted more; more able to endure,
As more expos'd to suffering and distress;
Thence, also, more alive to tenderness.
'Tis he whose law is reason; who depends
Upon that law as on the best of friends;
Whence, in a state where men are tempted still

To evil for a guard against worse ill,
 And what in quality or act is best
 Doth seldom on a right foundation rest,
 He fixes good on good alone, and owes
 To virtue every triumph that he knows:
 —Who, if he rise to station of command,
 Rises by open means; and there will stand
 On honourable terms, or else retire,
 And in himself possess his own desire;
 Who comprehends his trust, and to the same
 Keeps faithful with a singleness of aim;
 And therefore does not stoop, nor lie in wait
 For wealth, or honors, or for worldly state;
 Whom they must follow; on whose head must fall,
 Like showers of manna, if they come at all:
 Whose powers shed round him in the common strife,
 Or mild concerns of ordinary life,
 A constant influence, a peculiar grace;
 But who, if he be called upon to face
 Some awful moment to which heaven has join'd
 Great issues, good or bad for human-kind,
 Is happy as a Lover; and attired
 With sudden brightness like a Man inspired;
 And through the heat of conflict keeps the law
 In calmness made, and sees what he foresaw;
 Or if an unexpected call succeed,
 Come when it will, is equal to the need:
 —He who, though thus endued as with a sense
 And faculty for storm and turbulence,
 Is yet a Soul whose master bias leans
 To home-felt pleasures and to gentle scenes;
 Sweet images! which, wheresoe'er he be,
 Are at his heart; and such fidelity
 It is his darling passion to approve;
 More brave for this, that he hath much to love:
 'Tis, finally, the Man, who, lifted high,
 Conspicuous object in a Nation's eye,
 Or left unthought-of in obscurity,
 Who, with a toward or untoward lot,
 Prosperous or adverse, to his wish or not,
 Plays, in the many games of life, that one

Where what he most doth value must be won;
 Whom neither shape of danger can dismay,
 Nor thought of tender happiness betray;
 Who, not content that former worth stand fast,
 Looks forward, persevering to the last,
 From well to better, daily self-surpast:
 Who, whether praise of him must walk the earth
 For ever, and to noble deeds give birth,
 Or He must go to dust without his fame,
 And leave a dead unprofitable name,
 Finds comfort in himself and in his cause;
 And, while the mortal mist is gathering, draws
 His breath in confidence of Heaven's applause;
 This is the happy Warrior; this is He
 Whom every Man in arms should wish to be.

The above Verses were written soon after tidings had been received of the Death of Lord Nelson, which event directed the Author's thoughts to the subject. His respect for the memory of his great fellow-countryman induces him to mention this; though he is aware that the Verses must suffer from any connection in the Reader's mind with a Name so illustrious.

The Horn of Egremont Castle

WHEN the Brothers reach'd the gateway,
 Eustace pointed with his lance
 To the Horn which there was hanging;
 Horn of the inheritance.
 Horn it was which none could sound,
 No one upon living ground,
 Save He who came as rightful Heir
 To Egremont's Domains and Castle fair.

Heirs from ages without record
 Had the House of Lucie born,
 Who of right had claim'd the Lordship
 By the proof upon the Horn:
 Each at the appointed hour
 Tried the Horn, it own'd his power;
 He was acknowledged: and the blast
 Which good Sir Eustace sounded was the last.

THE HORN OF EGREMONT CASTLE

With his lance Sir Eustace pointed,
And to Hubert thus said he,
“What I speak this Horn shall witness
For thy better memory.
Hear, then, and neglect me not!
At this time, and on this spot,
The words are utter’d from my heart,
As my last earnest prayer ere we depart.

“On good service we are going
Life to risk by sea and land;
In which course if Christ our Saviour
Do my sinful soul demand,
Hither come thou back straightway,
Hubert, if alive that day;
Return, and sound the Horn, that we
May have a living House still left in thee!”

“Fear not,” quickly answer’d Hubert;
“As I am thy Father’s son,
What thou askest, noble Brother,
With God’s favour shall be done.”
So were both right well content:
From the Castle forth they went.
And at the head of their Array
To Palestine the Brothers took their way.

Side by side they fought (the Lucies
Were a line for valour fam’d)
And where’er their strokes alighted
There the Saracens were tam’d.
Whence, then, could it come the thought,
By what evil spirit brought?
Oh! can a brave Man wish to take
His Brother’s life, for Land’s and Castle’s sake?

“Sir!” the Ruffians said to Hubert,
“Deep he lies in Jordan flood.”—
Stricken by this ill assurance,
Pale and trembling Hubert stood.
“Take your earnings.”—Oh! that I

Could have seen my Brother die!
It was a pang that vex'd him then;
And oft returned, again, and yet again.

Months pass'd on, and no Sir Eustace!
Nor of him were tidings heard.
Wherefore, bold as day, the Murderer
Back again to England steer'd.
To his Castle Hubert sped;
He has nothing now to dread.
But silent and by stealth he came,
And at an hour which nobody could name.

None could tell if it were night-time,
Night or day, at even or morn;
For the sound was heard by no one
Of the proclamation-horn.
But bold Hubert lives in glee:
Months and years went smilingly;
With plenty was his table spread;
And bright the Lady is who shares his bed.

Likewise he had Sons and Daughters;
And, as good men do, he sate
At his board by these surrounded,
Flourishing in fair estate.
And, while thus in open day
Once he sate, as old books say,
A blast was utter'd from the Horn,
Where by the Castle-gate it hung forlorn.

'Tis the breath of good Sir Eustace!
He is come to claim his right:
Ancient Castle, Woods, and Mountains
Hear the challenge with delight.
Hubert! though the blast be blown
He is helpless and alone:
Thou hast a dungeon, speak the word!
And there he may be lodg'd, and thou be Lord.

Speak! astounded Hubert cannot;
And if power to speak he had,
All are daunted, all the household
Smitten to the heart, and sad.
'Tis Sir Eustace; if it be
Living Man, it must be he!
Thus Hubert thought in his dismay,
And by a Postern-gate he slunk away.

Long, and long was he unheard of:
To his Brother then he came,
Made confession, ask'd forgiveness,
Ask'd it by a Brother's name,
And by all the saints in heaven;
And of Eustace was forgiv'n:
Then in a Convent went to hide
His melancholy head, and there he died.

But Sir Eustace, whom good Angels
Had preserv'd from Murderers' hands,
And from Pagan chains had rescued,
Liv'd with honour on his lands.
Sons he had, saw Sons of theirs:
And through ages, Heirs of Heirs,
A long posterity renown'd,
Sounded the Horn which they alone could sound.

This Story is a Cumberland tradition; I have heard it also related of the Hall of Hutton John an antient residence of the Huddlestons, in a sequestered Valley upon the River Dacor.

The Kitten and the Falling Leaves

THAT way look, my Infant, lo!
What a pretty baby show!
See the Kitten on the Wall,
Sporting with the leaves that fall,
Wither'd leaves, one, two, and three,
From the lofty Elder-tree!
Through the calm and frosty air
Of this morning bright and fair,

Eddying round and round they sink
 Softly, slowly: one might think,
 From the motions that are made,
 Every little leaf convey'd
 Sylph or Faery hither tending,
 To this lower world descending,
 Each invisible and mute,
 In his wavering parachute.

——But the Kitten, how she starts,
 Crouches, stretches, paws, and darts;
 First at one and then it's fellow
 Just as light and just as yellow;
 There are many now—now one—
 Now they stop; and there are none—
 What intenseness of desire
 In her upward eye of fire!
 With a tiger-leap half way
 Now she meets the coming prey,
 Lets it go as fast, and then
 Has it in her power again:
 Now she works with three or four,
 Like an Indian Conjuror;
 Quick as he in feats of art,
 Far beyond in joy of heart.
 Were her antics play'd in the eye
 Of a thousand Standers-by,
 Clapping hands with shout and stare,
 What would little Tabby care
 For the plaudits of the Crowd?
 Over happy to be proud,
 Over wealthy in the treasure
 Of her own exceeding pleasure!

'Tis a pretty Baby-treat;
 Nor, I deem, for me unmeet:
 Here, for neither Babe or me,
 Other Play-mate can I see.
 Of the countless living things,
 That with stir of feet and wings,
 (In the sun or under shade
 Upon bough or grassy blade)

And with busy revellings,
 Chirp and song, and murmurings,
 Made this Orchard's narrow space,
 And this Vale so blithe a place;
 Multitudes are swept away
 Never more to breathe the day:
 Some are sleeping; some in Bands
 Travell'd into distant Lands;
 Others slunk to moor and wood,
 Far from human neighbourhood,
 And, among the Kinds that keep
 With us closer fellowship,
 With us openly abide,
 All have laid their mirth aside.

—Where is he that giddy Sprite,
 Blue-cap, with his colours bright,
 Who was blest as bird could be,
 Feeding in the apple-tree,
 Made such wanton spoil and rout,
 Turning blossoms inside out,
 Hung with head towards the ground,
 Flutter'd, perch'd; into a round
 Bound himself, and then unbound;
 Lithest, gaudiest Harlequin,
 Prettiest Tumbler ever seen,
 Light of heart, and light of limb,
 What is now become of Him?
 Lambs, that through the mountains went
 Frisking, bleating merriment,
 When the year was in it's prime,
 They are sober'd by this time.
 If you look to vale or hill,
 If you listen, all is still,
 Save a little neighbouring Rill;
 That from out the rocky ground
 Strikes a solitary sound.
 Vainly glitters hill and plain,
 And the air is calm in vain;
 Vainly Morning spreads the lure
 Of a sky serene and pure;

Creature none can she decoy
 Into open sign of joy:
 Is it that they have a fear
 Of the dreary season near?
 Or that other pleasures be
 Sweeter even than gaiety?

Yet, whate'er enjoyments dwell
 In the impenetrable cell
 Of the silent heart which Nature
 Furnishes to every Creature,
 Whatsoe'er we feel and know
 Too sedate for outward show,
 Such a light of gladness breaks,
 Pretty Kitten! from thy freaks,
 Spreads with such a living grace
 O'er my little Laura's face;
 Yes, the sight so stirs and charms
 Thee, Baby, laughing in my arms,
 That almost I could repine
 That your transports are not mine,
 That I do not wholly fare
 Even as ye do, thoughtless Pair!
 And I will have my careless season
 Spite of melancholy reason,
 Will walk through life in such a way
 That, when time brings on decay,
 Now and then I may possess
 Hours of perfect gladsomeness.
 —Pleas'd by any random toy;
 By a Kitten's busy joy,
 Or an infant's laughing eye
 Sharing in the extacy,
 I would fare like that or this,
 Find my wisdom in my bliss;
 Keep the sprightly soul awake,
 And have faculties to take
 Even from things by sorrow wrought
 Matter for a jocund thought;
 Spite of care, and spite of grief,
 To gambol with Life's falling Leaf.

To H. C.,

SIX YEARS OLD

O THOU! whose fancies from afar are brought;
 Who of thy words dost make a mock apparel,
 And fittest to unutterable thought
 The breeze-like motion and the self-born carol;
 Thou Faery Voyager! that dost float
 In such clear water, that thy Boat
 May rather seem
 To brood on air than on an earthly stream;
 Suspended in a stream as clear as sky,
 Where earth and heaven do make one imagery;
 O blessed Vision! happy Child!
 That art so exquisitely wild,
 I think of thee with many fears
 For what may be thy lot in future years.

I thought of times when Pain might be thy guest,
 Lord of thy house and hospitality;
 And grief, uneasy Lover! never rest
 But when she sate within the touch of thee.
 Oh! too industrious folly!
 Oh! vain and causeless melancholy!
 Nature will either end thee quite;
 Or, lengthening out thy season of delight,
 Preserve for thee, by individual right,
 A young Lamb's heart among the full-grown flocks.
 What hast Thou to do with sorrow,
 Or the injuries of tomorrow?
 Thou art a Dew-drop, which the morn brings forth,
 Not doom'd to jostle with unkindly shocks;
 Or to be trail'd along the soiling earth;
 A Gem that glitters while it lives,
 And no forewarning gives;
 But, at the touch of wrong, without a strife
 Slips in a moment out of life.

AMONG all lovely things my Love had been;
 A Had noted well the stars, all flowers that grew
 About her home; but she had never seen
 A Glow-worm, never one, and this I knew.

While riding near her home one stormy night
 A single Glow-worm did I chance to espy;
 I gave a fervent welcome to the sight,
 And from my Horse I leapt; great joy had I.

Upon a leaf the Glow-worm did I lay,
 To bear it with me through the stormy night:
 And, as before, it shone without dismay;
 Albeit putting forth a fainter light.

When to the Dwelling of my Love I came,
 I went into the Orchard quietly;
 And left the Glow-worm, blessing it by name,
 Laid safely by itself, beneath a Tree.

The whole next day, I hoped, and hoped with fear;
 At night the Glow-worm shone beneath the Tree:
 I led my Lucy to the spot, "Look here!"
 Oh! joy it was for her, and joy for me!

Ode to Duty

STERN Daughter of the Voice of God!
 O Duty! if that name thou love
 Who art a Light to guide, a Rod
 To check the erring, and reprove;
 Thou who art victory and law
 When empty terrors overawe;
 From vain temptations dost set free;
 From strife and from despair; a glorious ministry.

There are who ask not if thine eye
 Be on them; who, in love and truth,
 Where no misgiving is, rely
 Upon the genial sense of youth:

ODE TO DUTY

Glad Hearts! without reproach or blot;
Who do thy work, and know it not:
May joy be theirs while life shall last!
And Thou, if they should totter, teach them to stand fast!

Serene will be our days and bright,
And happy will our nature be,
When love is an unerring light,
And joy its own security.
And bless'd are they who in the main
This faith, even now, do entertain:
Live in the spirit of this creed;
Yet find that other strength, according to their need.

I, loving freedom, and untried;
No sport of every random gust,
Yet being to myself a guide,
Too blindly have reposed my trust:
Resolved that nothing e'er should press
Upon my present happiness,
I shoved unwelcome tasks away;
But thee I now would serve more strictly, if I may.

Through no disturbance of my soul,
Or strong compunction in me wrought,
I supplicate for thy controul;
But in the quietness of thought:
Me this uncharter'd freedom tires;
I feel the weight of chance desires:
My hopes no more must change their name,
I long for a repose which ever is the same.

Yet not the less would I throughout
Still act according to the voice
Of my own wish; and feel past doubt
That my submissiveness was choice:
Not seeking in the school of pride
For "precepts over dignified,"
Denial and restraint I prize
No farther than they breed a second Will more wise

Stern Lawgiver! yet thou dost wear
 The Godhead's most benignant grace;
 Nor know we any thing so fair
 As is the smile upon thy face;
 Flowers laugh before thee on their beds;
 And Fragrance in thy footing treads;
 Thou dost preserve the Stars from wrong;
 And the most ancient Heavens through Thee are fresh and
 strong.

To humbler functions, awful Power!
 I call thee: I myself commend
 Unto thy guidance from this hour;
 Oh! let my weakness have an end!
 Give unto me, made lowly wise,
 The spirit of self-sacrifice;
 The confidence of reason give;
 And in the light of truth thy Bondman let me live!

Beggars

SHE had a tall Man's height, or more;
 No bonnet screen'd her from the heat;
 A long drab-colour'd Cloak she wore,
 A Mantle reaching to her feet:
 What other dress she had I could not know;
 Only she wore a Cap that was as white as snow.

In all my walks, through field or town,
 Such Figure had I never seen:
 Her face was of Egyptian brown:
 Fit person was she for a Queen,
 To head those ancient Amazonian files:
 Or ruling Bandit's Wife, among the Grecian Isles.

Before me begging did she stand,
 Pouring out sorrows like a sea;
 Grief after grief:—on English Land
 Such woes I knew could never be;
 And yet a boon I gave her; for the Creature
 Was beautiful to see; a Weed of glorious feature!

I left her, and pursued my way;
 And soon before me did espy
 A pair of little Boys at play,
 Chasing a crimson butterfly;
 The Taller follow'd with his hat in hand,
 Wreath'd round with yellow flow'rs the gayest of the land.

The Other wore a rimless crown,
 With leaves of laurel stuck about:
 And they both follow'd up and down,
 Each whooping with a merry shout;
 Two Brothers seem'd they, eight and ten years old;
 And like that Woman's face as gold is like to gold.

They bolted on me thus, and lo!
 Each ready with a plaintive whine;
 Said I, "Not half an hour ago
 Your Mother has had alms of mine."
 "That cannot be," one answer'd, "She is dead."
 "Nay but I gave her pence, and she will buy you bread."

"She has been dead, Sir, many a day."
 "Sweet Boys, you're telling me a lie;
 "It was your Mother, as I say—"
 And in the twinkling of an eye,
 "Come, come!" cried one; and, without more ado,
 Off to some other play they both together flew.

To a Sky-Lark

UP with me! up with me into the clouds!
 For thy song, Lark, is strong;
 Up with me, up with me into the clouds!
 Singing, singing,
 With all the heav'ns about thee ringing,
 Lift me, guide me, till I find
 That spot which seems so to thy mind!

I have walk'd through wildernesses dreary,
 And today my heart is weary;

Had I now the soul of a Faery,
 Up to thee would I fly.
 There is madness about thee, and joy divine
 In that song of thine;
 Up with me, up with me, high and high,
 To thy banqueting-place in the sky!
 Joyous as Morning,
 Thou art laughing and scorning;
 Thou hast a nest, for thy love and thy rest:
 And, though little troubled with sloth,
 Drunken Lark! thou would'st be loth
 To be such a Traveller as I.
 Happy, happy Liver!
 With a soul as strong as a mountain River,
 Pouring out praise to the Almighty Giver,
 Joy and jollity be with us both!
 Hearing thee, or else some other,
 As merry a Brother,
 I on the earth will go plodding on,
 By myself, chearfully, till the day is done.

“**W**ITH how sad steps, O Moon thou climb'st the sky,
 How silently, and with how wan a face!”¹
 Where art thou? Thou whom I have seen on high
 Running among the clouds a Wood-nymph's race?
 Unhappy Nuns, whose common breath's a sigh
 Which they would stifle, move at such a pace!
 The Northern Wind, to call thee to the chace,
 Must blow tonight his bugle horn. Had I
 The power of Merlin, Goddess! this should be:
 And all the Stars, now shrouded up in heaven,
 Should sally forth to keep thee company.
 What strife would then be yours, fair Creatures, driv'n
 Now up, now down, and sparkling in your glee!
 But, Cynthia, should to Thee the palm be giv'n,
 Queen both for beauty and for majesty.

¹ From a sonnet of Sir Philip Sydney.

Resolution and Independence

THERE was a roaring in the wind all night;
 The rain came heavily and fell in floods;
 But now the sun is rising calm and bright;
 The birds are singing in the distant woods;
 Over his own sweet voice the Stock-dove broods;
 The Jay makes answer as the Magpie chatters;
 And all the air is fill'd with pleasant noise of waters.

All things that love the sun are out of doors;
 The sky rejoices in the morning's birth;
 The grass is bright with rain-drops; on the moors
 The Hare is running races in her mirth;
 And with her feet she from the plashy earth
 Raises a mist; which, glittering in the sun,
 Runs with her all the way, wherever she doth run.

I was a Traveller then upon the moor;
 I saw the Hare that rac'd about with joy;
 I heard the woods, and distant waters, roar;
 Or heard them not, as happy as a Boy:
 The pleasant season did my heart employ:
 My old remembrances went from me wholly;
 And all the ways of men, so vain and melancholy.

But, as it sometimes chanceth, from the might
 Of joy in minds that can no farther go,
 As high as we have mounted in delight
 In our dejection do we sink as low,
 To me that morning did it happen so;
 And fears, and fancies, thick upon me came;
 Dim sadness, and blind thoughts I knew not nor could name.

I heard the Sky-lark singing in the sky;
 And I bethought me of the playful Hare:
 Even such a happy Child of earth am I;
 Even as these blissful Creatures do I fare;
 Far from the world I walk, and from all care;
 But there may come another day to me,
 Solitude, pain of heart, distress, and poverty.

My whole life I have liv'd in pleasant thought,
As if life's business were a summer mood;
As if all needful things would come unsought
To genial faith, still rich in genial good;
But how can He expect that others should
Build for him, sow for him, and at his call
Love him, who for himself will take no heed at all?

I thought of Chatterton, the marvellous Boy,
The sleepless Soul that perish'd in its pride;
Of Him who walk'd in glory and in joy
Behind his plough, upon the mountain-side:
By our own spirits are we deified;
We Poets in our youth begin in gladness;
But thereof comes in the end despondency and madness.

Now, whether it were by peculiar grace,
A leading from above, a something given,
Yet it befel, that, in this lonely place,
When up and down my fancy thus was driven,
And I with these untoward thoughts had striven,
I saw a Man before me unawares:
The oldest Man he seem'd that ever wore grey hairs.

My course I stopped as soon as I espied
The Old Man in that naked wilderness:
Close by a Pond, upon the further side,
He stood alone: a minute's space I guess
I watch'd him, he continuing motionless:
To the Pool's further margin then I drew;
He being all the while before me full in view.

As a huge Stone is sometimes seen to lie
Couch'd on the bald top of an eminence;
Wonder to all who do the same espy
By what means it could thither come, and whence;
So that it seems a thing endued with sense:
Like a Sea-beast crawl'd forth, which on a shelf
Of rock or sand reposes, there to sun itself.

Such seem'd this Man, not all alive nor dead,
 Nor all asleep; in his extreme old age:
 His body was bent double, feet and head
 Coming together in their pilgrimage;
 As if some dire constraint of pain, or rage
 Of sickness felt by him in times long past,
 A more than human weight upon his frame had cast.

Himself he propp'd, his body, limbs, and face,
 Upon a long grey Staff of shaven wood:
 And, still as I drew near with gentle pace,
 Beside the little pond or moorish flood
 Motionless as a Cloud the Old Man stood;
 That heareth not the loud winds when they call;
 And moveth altogether, if it move at all.

At length, himself unsettling, he the Pond
 Stirred with his Staff, and fixedly did look
 Upon the muddy water, which he conn'd,
 As if he had been reading in a book:
 And now such freedom as I could I took;
 And, drawing to his side, to him did say,
 "This morning gives us promise of a glorious day."

A gentle answer did the Old Man make,
 In courteous speech which forth he slowly drew:
 And him with further words I thus bespake,
 "What kind of work is that which you pursue?
 This is a lonesome place for one like you."
 He answer'd me with pleasure and surprize;
 And there was, while he spake, a fire about his eyes.

His words came feebly, from a feeble chest,
 Yet each in solemn order follow'd each,
 With something of a lofty utterance drest;
 Choice word, and measured phrase; above the reach
 Of ordinary men; a stately speech!
 Such as grave Livers do in Scotland use,
 Religious men, who give to God and Man their dues.

He told me that he to this pond had come
 To gather Leeches, being old and poor:
 Employment hazardous and wearisome!
 And he had many hardships to endure:
 From Pond to Pond he roam'd, from moor to moor,
 Housing, with God's good help, by choice or chance:
 And in this way he gain'd an honest maintenance.

The Old Man still stood talking by my side;
 But now his voice to me was like a stream
 Scarce heard; nor word from word could I divide;
 And the whole Body of the man did seem
 Like one whom I had met with in a dream;
 Or like a Man from some far region sent;
 To give me human strength, and strong admonishment.

My former thoughts return'd: the fear that kills;
 The hope that is unwilling to be fed;
 Cold, pain, and labour, and all fleshly ills;
 And mighty Poets in their misery dead.
 And now, not knowing what the Old Man had said,
 My question eagerly did I renew,
 "How is it that you live, and what is it you do?"

He with a smile did then his words repeat;
 And said, that, gathering Leeches, far and wide
 He travelled; stirring thus about his feet
 The waters of the Ponds where they abide.
 "Once I could meet with them on every side;
 But they have dwindled long by slow decay;
 Yet still I persevere, and find them where I may."

While he was talking thus, the lonely place,
 The Old Man's shape, and speech, all troubled me:
 In my mind's eye I seem'd to see him pace
 About the weary moors continually,
 Wandering about alone and silently.
 While I these thoughts within myself pursued,
 He, having made a pause, the same discourse renewed.

RESOLUTION AND INDEPENDENCE

And soon with this he other matter blended,
Chearfully uttered, with demeanour kind,
But stately in the main; and, when he ended,
I could have laugh'd myself to scorn, to find
In that decrepit Man so firm a mind.
"God," said I, "be my help and stay secure;
I'll think of the Leech-gatherer on the lonely moor."

Sonnets

PREFATORY SONNET

NUNS fret not at their Convent's narrow room;
 And Hermits are contented with their Cells;
 And Students with their pensive Citadels:
 Maids at the Wheel, the Weaver at his Loom,
 Sit blithe and happy; Bees that soar for bloom,
 High as the highest Peak of Furness Fells,
 Will murmur by the hour in Foxglove bells:
 In truth, the prison, unto which we doom
 Ourselves, no prison is: and hence to me,
 In sundry moods, 'twas pastime to be bound
 Within the Sonnet's scanty plot of ground:
 Pleas'd if some Souls (for such there needs must be)
 Who have felt the weight of too much liberty,
 Should find short solace there, as I have found.

How sweet it is, when mother Fancy rocks
 The wayward brain, to saunter through a wood!
 An old place, full of many a lovely brood,
 Tall trees, green arbours, and ground flowers in flocks;
 And Wild rose tip-toe upon hawthorn stocks,
 Like to a bonny Lass, who plays her pranks
 At Wakes and Fairs with wandering Mountebanks,
 When she stands cresting the Clown's head, and mocks
 The crowd beneath her. Verily I think,
 Such place to me is sometimes like a dream
 Or map of the whole world: thoughts, link by link,
 Enter through ears and eyesight, with such gleam
 Of all things, that at last in fear I shrink,
 And leap at once from the delicious stream.

WHERE lies the Land to which yon Ship must go?
 Festively she puts forth in trim array;
 As vigorous as a Lark at break of day:
 Is she for tropic suns, or polar snow?
 What boots the enquiry? Neither friend nor foe
 She cares for; let her travel where she may,
 She finds familiar names, a beaten way
 Ever before her, and a wind to blow.
 Yet still I ask, what Haven is her mark?
 And, almost as it was when ships were rare,
 From time to time, like Pilgrims, here and there
 Crossing the waters; doubt, and something dark,
 Of the old Sea some reverential fear,
 Is with me at thy farewell, joyous Bark!

COMPOSED AFTER A JOURNEY ACROSS
 THE HAMILTON HILLS, YORKSHIRE

ERE we had reach'd the wish'd-for place, night fell:
 We were too late at least by one dark hour,
 And nothing could we see of all that power
 Of prospect, whereof many thousands tell.
 The western sky did recompence us well
 With Grecian Temple, Minaret, and Bower;
 And, in one part, a Minster with its Tower
 Substantially distinct, a place for Bell
 Or Clock to toll from. Many a glorious pile
 Did we behold, sights that might well repay
 All disappointment! and, as such, the eye
 Delighted in them; but we felt, the while,
 We should forget them: they are of the sky,
 And from our earthly memory fade away.

*. they are of the sky,
And from our earthly memory fade away.*

THESE words were utter'd in a pensive mood,
Even while mine eyes were on that solemn sight:
A contrast and reproach to gross delight,
And life's unspiritual pleasures daily woo'd!
But now upon this thought I cannot brood:
It is unstable, and deserts me quite;
Nor will I praise a Cloud, however bright,
Disparaging Man's gifts, and proper food.
The Grove, the sky-built Temple, and the Dome,
Though clad in colours beautiful and pure,
Find in the heart of man no natural home:
The immortal Mind craves objects that endure:
These cleave to it; from these it cannot roam,
Nor they from it: their fellowship is secure.

TO SLEEP

O GENTLE Sleep! do they belong to thee,
These twinklings of oblivion? Thou dost love
To sit in meekness, like the brooding Dove,
A Captive never wishing to be free.
This tiresome night, O Sleep! thou art to me
A Fly, that up and down himself doth shove
Upon a fretful rivulet, now above,
Now on the water vex'd with mockery.
I have no pain that calls for patience, no;
Hence am I cross and peevish as a child:
Am pleas'd by fits to have thee for my foe,
Yet ever willing to be reconciled:
O gentle Creature! do not use me so,
But once and deeply let me be beguiled.

SONNETS

TO SLEEP

A FLOCK of sheep that leisurely pass by,
One after one; the sound of rain, and bees
Murmuring; the fall of rivers, winds and seas,
Smooth fields, white sheets of water, and pure sky;
I've thought of all by turns; and still I lie
Sleepless; and soon the small birds melodies
Must hear, first utter'd from my orchard trees;
And the first Cuckoo's melancholy cry.
Even thus last night, and two nights more, I lay,
And could not win thee, Sleep! by any stealth:
So do not let me wear to night away:
Without Thee what is all the morning's wealth?
Come, blessed barrier betwixt day and day,
Dear mother of fresh thoughts and joyous health!

TO SLEEP

FOND words have oft been spoken to thee, Sleep!
And thou hast had thy store of tenderest names;
The very sweetest words that fancy frames
When thankfulness of heart is strong and deep!
Dear bosom Child we call thee, that dost steep
In rich reward all suffering; Balm that tames
All anguish; Saint that evil thoughts and aims
Takest away, and into souls dost creep,
Like to a breeze from heaven. Shall I alone;
I surely not a man ungently made,
Call thee worst Tyrant by which Flesh is crost?
Perverse, self-will'd to own and to disown,
Mere Slave of them who never for thee pray'd,
Still last to come where thou art wanted most!

WITH Ships the sea was sprinkled far and nigh,
 Like stars in heaven, and joyously it showed;
 Some lying fast at anchor in the road,
 Some veering up and down, one knew not why.
 A goodly Vessel did I then espy
 Come like a Giant from a haven broad;
 And lustily along the Bay she strode,
 Her tackling rich, and of apparel high.
 This Ship was nought to me, nor I to her,
 Yet I pursued her with a Lover's look;
 This Ship to all the rest did I prefer:
 When will she turn, and whither? She will brook
 No tarrying; where she comes the winds must stir:
 On went She, and due north her journey took.

TO THE RIVER DUDDON

O MOUNTAIN Stream! the Shepherd and his Cot
 Are privileg'd Inmates of deep solitude:
 Nor would the nicest Anchorite exclude
 A Field or two of brighter green, or Plot
 Of tillage-ground, that seemeth like a spot
 Of stationary sunshine: thou hast view'd
 These only, Duddon! with their paths renew'd
 By fits and starts, yet this contents thee not.
 Thee hath some awful Spirit impell'd to leave,
 Utterly to desert, the haunts of men,
 Though simple thy Companions were and few;
 And through this wilderness a passage cleave
 Attended but by thy own Voice, save when
 The Clouds and Fowls of the air thy way pursue.

FROM THE ITALIAN OF MICHAEL ANGELO

YEs! hope may with my strong desire keep pace,
 And I be undeluded, unbetray'd;
 For if of our affections none find grace
 In sight of Heaven, then, wherefore hath God made
 The world which we inhabit? Better plea
 Love cannot have, than that in loving thee
 Glory to that eternal Peace is paid,
 Who such Divinity to thee imparts
 As hallows and makes pure all gentle hearts.
 His hope is treacherous only whose love dies
 With beauty, which is varying every hour;
 But, in chaste hearts uninfluenced by the power
 Of outward change, there blooms a deathless flower,
 That breathes on earth the air of paradise.

 FROM THE SAME

No mortal object did these eyes behold
 When first they met the placid light of thine,
 And my Soul felt her destiny divine,
 And hope of endless peace in me grew bold:
 Heav'n born, the Soul a heav'n-ward course must hold;
 Beyond the visible world She soars to seek,
 For what delights the sense is false and weak,
 Ideal Form, the universal mould.
 The wise man, I affirm, can find no rest
 In that which perishes: nor will he lend
 His heart to aught which doth on time depend.
 'Tis sense, unbridled will, and not true love,
 Which kills the soul: Love betters what is best,
 Even here below, but more in heaven above.

FROM THE SAME
TO THE SUPREME BEING

THE prayers I make will then be sweet indeed
If Thou the spirit give by which I pray:
My unassisted heart is barren clay,
Which of its native self can nothing feed:
Of good and pious works thou art the seed,
Which quickens only where thou say'st it may:
Unless thou shew to us thine own true way
No man can find it: Father! thou must lead.
Do Thou, then, breathe those thoughts into my mind
By which such virtue may in me be bred
That in thy holy footsteps I may tread;
The fetters of my tongue do Thou unbind,
That I may have the power to sing of thee,
And sound thy praises everlastingly.

COMPOSED UPON WESTMINSTER BRIDGE,

Sept. 3, 1803.

EARTH has not any thing to shew more fair:
Dull would he be of soul who could pass by
A sight so touching in it's majesty:
This City now doth like a garment wear
The beauty of the morning; silent, bare,
Ships, towers, domes, theatres, and temples lie
Open unto the fields, and to the sky;
All bright and glittering in the smokeless air.
Never did sun more beautifully steep
In his first splendor valley, rock, or hill;
Ne'er saw I, never felt, a calm so deep!
The river glideth at his own sweet will:
Dear God! the very houses seem asleep;
And all that mighty heart is lying still!

"BELOVED Vale!" I said, "when I shall con
 Those many records of my childish years,
 Remembrance of myself and of my peers
 Will press me down: to think of what is gone
 Will be an awful thought, if life have one."
 But, when into the Vale I came, no fears
 Distress'd me; I look'd round, I shed no tears;
 Deep thought, or awful vision, I had none.
 By thousand petty fancies I was cross'd,
 To see the Trees, which I had thought so tall,
 Mere dwarfs; the Brooks so narrow, Fields so small.
 A Juggler's Balls old Time about him toss'd;
 I looked, I stared, I smiled, I laughed; and all
 The weight of sadness was in wonder lost.

TO THE

LADY! the songs of Spring were in the grove
 While I was framing beds for winter flowers;
 While I was planting green unfading bowers,
 And shrubs to hang upon the warm alcove,
 And sheltering wall; and still, as fancy wove
 The dream, to time and nature's blended powers
 I gave this paradise for winter hours,
 A labyrinth Lady! which your feet shall rove.
 Yes! when the sun of life more feebly shines,
 Becoming thoughts, I trust, of solemn gloom
 Or of high gladness you shall hither bring;
 And these perennial bowers and murmuring pines
 Be gracious as the music and the bloom
 And all the mighty ravishment of Spring.

THE world is too much with us; late and soon,
 Getting and spending, we lay waste our powers:
 Little we see in nature that is ours;
 We have given our hearts away, a sordid boon!
 This Sea that bares her bosom to the moon;
 The Winds that will be howling at all hours
 And are up-gathered now like sleeping flowers;
 For this, for every thing, we are out of tune;
 It moves us not—Great God! I'd rather be
 A Pagan suckled in a creed outworn;
 So might I, standing on this pleasant lea,
 Have glimpses that would make me less forlorn;
 Have sight of Proteus coming from the sea;
 Or hear old Triton blow his wreathed horn.

IT is a beauteous Evening, calm and free;
 The holy time is quiet as a Nun
 Breathless with adoration; the broad sun
 Is sinking down in its tranquillity;
 The gentleness of heaven is on the Sea:
 Listen! the mighty Being is awake
 And doth with his eternal motion make
 A sound like thunder—everlastingly.
 Dear Child! dear Girl! that walkest with me here,
 If thou appear'st untouch'd by solemn thought,
 Thy nature is not therefore less divine:
 Thou liest in Abraham's bosom all the year;
 And worshipp'st at the Temple's inner shrine,
 God being with thee when we know it not.

Sonnets Dedicated to Liberty

COMPOSED BY THE SEA-SIDE,
NEAR CALAIS,

August, 1802

FAIR Star of Evening, Splendor of the West,
Star of my Country! on the horizon's brink
Thou hangest, stooping, as might seem, to sink
On England's bosom; yet well pleas'd to rest,
Meanwhile, and be to her a glorious crest
Conspicuous to the Nations. Thou, I think,
Should'st be my Country's emblem; and should'st wink,
Bright Star! with laughter on her banners, drest
In thy fresh beauty. There! that dusky spot
Beneath thee, it is England; there it lies.
Blessing be on you both! one hope, one lot,
One life, one glory! I, with many a fear
For my dear Country, many heartfelt sighs,
Among Men who do not love her linger here.

CALAIS,
August, 1802

Is it a Reed that's shaken by the wind,
Or what is it that ye go forth to see?
Lords, Lawyers, Statesmen, Squires of low degree,
Men known, and men unknown, Sick, Lame, and Blind,
Post forward all, like Creatures of one kind,
With first-fruit offerings crowd to bend the knee
In France, before the new-born Majesty.
'Tis ever thus. Ye Men of prostrate mind!
A seemly reverence may be paid to power;
But that's a loyal virtue, never sown
In haste, nor springing with a transient shower:
When truth, when sense, when liberty were flown
What hardship had it been to wait an hour?
Shame on you, feeble Heads, to slavery prone!

TO A FRIEND,

COMPOSED NEAR CALAIS,
ON THE ROAD LEADING TO ARDRES,

August 7th, 1802

JONES! when from Calais southward you and I
Travell'd on foot together; then this Way,
Which I am pacing now, was like the May
With festivals of new-born Liberty:
A homeless sound of joy was in the Sky;
The antiquated Earth, as one might say,
Beat like the heart of Man: songs, garlands, play,
Banners, and happy faces, far and nigh!
And now, sole register that these things were,
Two solitary greetings have I heard,
“*Good morrow, Citizen!*” a hollow word,
As if a dead Man spake it! Yet despair
I feel not: happy am I as a Bird:
Fair seasons yet will come, and hopes as fair.

IGRIEV'D for Buonaparte, with a vain
And an unthinking grief! the vital blood
Of that Man's mind what can it be? What food
Fed his first hopes? What knowledge could He gain?
'Tis not in battles that from youth we train
The Governor who must be wise and good,
And temper with the sternness of the brain
Thoughts motherly, and meek as womanhood.
Wisdom doth live with children round her knees:
Books, leisure, perfect freedom, and the talk
Man holds with week-day man in the hourly walk
Of the mind's business: these are the degrees
By which true Sway doth mount; this is the stalk
True Power doth grow on; and her rights are these.

CALAIS,

August 15th, 1802

FESTIVALS have I seen that were not names:
 This is young Buonaparte's natal day;
 And his is henceforth an established sway,
 Consul for life. With worship France proclaims
 Her approbation, and with pomps and games.
 Heaven grant that other Cities may be gay!
 Calais is not: and I have bent my way
 To the Sea-coast, noting that each man frames
 His business as he likes. Another time
 That was, when I was here long years ago:
 The senselessness of joy was then sublime!
 Happy is he, who, caring not for Pope,
 Consul, or King, can sound himself to know
 The destiny of Man, and live in hope.

ON THE EXTINCTION OF THE
 VENETIAN REPUBLIC

ONCE did She hold the gorgeous East in fee;
 And was the safeguard of the West: the worth
 Of Venice did not fall below her birth,
 Venice, the eldest Child of Liberty.
 She was a Maiden City, bright and free;
 No guile seduced, no force could violate;
 And when She took unto herself a Mate
 She must espouse the everlasting Sea.
 And what if she had seen those glories fade,
 Those titles vanish, and that strength decay,
 Yet shall some tribute of regret be paid
 When her long life hath reach'd its final day:
 Men are we, and must grieve when even the Shade
 Of that which once was great is pass'd away.

THE KING OF SWEDEN

THE Voice of Song from distant lands shall call
 To that great King; shall hail the crowned Youth
 Who, taking counsel of unbending Truth,
 By one example hath set forth to all
 How they with dignity may stand; or fall,
 If fall they must. Now, whither doth it tend?
 And what to him and his shall be the end?
 That thought is one which neither can appal
 Nor chear him; for the illustrious Swede hath done
 The thing which ought to be: He stands *above*
 All consequences: work he hath begun
 Of fortitude, and piety, and love,
 Which all his glorious Ancestors approve:
 The Heroes bless him, him their rightful Son.

TO TOUSSAINT L'OUVERTURE

TOUSSAINT, the most unhappy Man of Men!
 Whether the rural Milk-maid by her Cow
 Sing in thy hearing, or thou liest now
 Alone in some deep dungeon's earless den,
 O miserable chieftain! where and when
 Wilt thou find patience? Yet die not; do thou
 Wear rather in thy bonds a chearful brow:
 Though fallen Thyself, never to rise again,
 Live, and take comfort. Thou hast left behind
 Powers that will work for thee; air, earth, and skies;
 There's not a breathing of the common wind
 That will forget thee; thou hast great allies;
 Thy friends are exultations, agonies,
 And love, and Man's unconquerable mind.

September 1st, 1802

WE had a fellow-Passenger who came
 From Calais with us, gaudy in array,
 A Negro Woman like a Lady gay,
 Yet silent as a woman fearing blame;
 Dejected, meek, yea pitiably tame,
 She sate, from notice turning not away,
 But on our proffer'd kindness still did lay
 A weight of languid speech, or at the same
 Was silent, motionless in eyes and face.
 She was a Negro Woman driv'n from France,
 Rejected like all others of that race,
 Not one of whom may now find footing there;
 This the poor Out-cast did to us declare,
 Nor murmur'd at the unfeeling Ordinance.

COMPOSED IN THE VALLEY, NEAR DOVER,
 ON THE DAY OF LANDING

DEAR fellow Traveller! here we are once more.
 The Cock that crows, the Smoke that curls, that sound
 Of Bells, those Boys that in yon meadow-ground
 In white sleev'd shirts are playing by the score,
 And even this little River's gentle roar,
 All, all are English. Oft have I look'd round
 With joy in Kent's green vales; but never found
 Myself so satisfied in heart before.
 Europe is yet in Bonds; but let that pass,
 Thought for another moment. Thou art free
 My Country! and 'tis joy enough and pride
 For one hour's perfect bliss, to tread the grass
 Of England once again, and hear and see,
 With such a dear Companion at my side.

September, 1802

INLAND, within a hollow Vale, I stood,
 And saw, while sea was calm and air was clear,
 The Coast of France, the Coast of France how near!
 Drawn almost into frightful neighbourhood.
 I shrunk, for verily the barrier flood
 Was like a Lake, or River bright and fair,
 A span of waters; yet what power is there!
 What mightiness for evil and for good!
 Even so doth God protect us if we be
 Virtuous and wise: Winds blow, and Waters roll,
 Strength to the brave, and Power, and Deity,
 Yet in themselves are nothing! One decree
 Spake laws to *them*, and said that by the Soul
 Only the Nations shall be great and free.

THOUGHT OF A BRITON ON THE
 SUBJUGATION OF SWITZERLAND

Two Voices are there; one is of the Sea,
 One of the Mountains; each a mighty Voice:
 In both from age to age Thou didst rejoice,
 They were thy chosen Music, Liberty!
 There came a Tyrant, and with holy glee
 Thou fought'st against Him; but hast vainly striven;
 Thou from thy Alpine Holds at length art driven,
 Where not a torrent murmurs heard by thee.
 Of one deep bliss thine ear hath been bereft:
 Then cleave, O cleave to that which still is left!
 For, high-soul'd Maid, what sorrow would it be
 That mountain Floods should thunder as before,
 And Ocean bellow from his rocky shore,
 And neither awful Voice be heard by thee!

WRITTEN IN LONDON

September, 1802

O FRIEND! I know not which way I must look
For comfort, being, as I am, opprest,
To think that now our Life is only drest
For shew; mean handywork of craftsman, cook,
Or groom! We must run glittering like a Brook
In the open sunshine, or we are unblest:
The wealthiest man among us is the best:
No grandeur now in nature or in book
Delights us. Rapine, avarice, expence,
This is idolatry; and these we adore:
Plain living and high thinking are no more:
The homely beauty of the good old cause
Is gone; our peace, our fearful innocence,
And pure religion breathing household laws.

LONDON

1802

MILTON! thou should'st be living at this hour:
England hath need of thee: she is a fen
Of stagnant waters: altar, sword and pen,
Fireside, the heroic wealth of hall and bower,
Have forfeited their ancient English dower
Of inward happiness. We are selfish men;
Oh! raise us up, return to us again;
And give us manners, virtue, freedom, power.
Thy soul was like a Star and dwelt apart:
Thou hadst a voice whose sound was like the sea;
Pure as the naked heavens, majestic, free,
So didst thou travel on life's common way,
In chearful godliness; and yet thy heart
The lowliest duties on itself did lay.

GREAT Men have been among us; hands that penn'd
 And tongues that utter'd wisdom, better none:
 The later Sydney, Marvel, Harrington,
 Young Vane, and others who call'd Milton Friend.
 These Moralists could act and comprehend:
 They knew how genuine glory was put on;
 Taught us how rightfully a nation shone
 In splendor: what strength was, that would not bend
 But in magnanimous meekness. France, 'tis strange,
 Hath brought forth no such souls as we had then.
 Perpetual emptiness! unceasing change!
 No single Volume paramount, no code,
 No master spirit, no determined road;
 But equally a want of Books and Men!

IT is not to be thought of that the Flood
 Of British freedom, which to the open Sea
 Of the world's praise from dark antiquity
 Hath flowed, "with pomp of waters, unwithstood,"
 Road by which all might come and go that would,
 And bear out freights of worth to foreign lands;
 That this most famous Stream in Bogs and Sands
 Should perish; and to evil and to good
 Be lost for ever. In our Halls is hung
 Armoury of the invincible Knights of old:
 We must be free or die, who speak the tongue
 That Shakespeare spake; the faith and morals hold
 Which Milton held. In every thing we are sprung
 Of Earth's first blood, have titles manifold.

WHEN I have borne in memory what has tamed
 Great Nations, how ennobling thoughts depart
 When Men change Swords for Ledgers, and desert
 The Student's bower for gold, some fears unnamed
 I had, my Country! am I to be blamed?
 But, when I think of Thee, and what Thou art,
 Verily, in the bottom of my heart,
 Of those unfilial fears I am ashamed.
 But dearly must we prize thee; we who find
 In thee a bulwark of the cause of men;
 And I by my affection was beguiled.
 What wonder, if a Poet, now and then,
 Among the many movements of his mind,
 Felt for thee as a Lover or a Child.

October, 1803

ONE might believe that natural miseries
 Had blasted France, and made of it a land
 Unfit for Men; and that in one great Band
 Her Sons were bursting forth, to dwell at ease.
 But 'tis a chosen soil, where sun and breeze
 Shed gentle favors; rural works are there;
 And ordinary business without care;
 Spot rich in all things that can soothe and please!
 How piteous then that there should be such dearth
 Of knowledge; that whole myriads should unite
 To work against themselves such fell despite:
 Should come in phrenzy and in drunken mirth,
 Impatient to put out the only light
 Of Liberty that yet remains on Earth!

THERE is a bondage which is worse to bear
 Than his who breathes, by roof, and floor, and wall,
 Pent in, a Tyrant's solitary Thrall:
 'Tis his who walks about in the open air,
 One of a Nation who, henceforth, must wear
 Their fetters in their Souls. For who could be,
 Who, even the best, in such condition, free
 From self-reproach, reproach which he must share
 With Human Nature? Never be it ours
 To see the Sun how brightly it will shine,
 And know that noble Feelings, manly Powers,
 Instead of gathering strength must droop and pine,
 And Earth with all her pleasant fruits and flowers
 Fade, and participate in Man's decline.

October, 1803

THESE times touch money'd Wordlings with dismay:
 Even rich men, brave by nature, taint the air
 With words of apprehension and despair:
 While tens of thousands, thinking on the affray,
 Men unto whom sufficient for the day
 And minds not stinted or untill'd are given,
 Sound, healthy Children of the God of Heaven,
 Are cheerful as the rising Sun in May.
 What do we gather hence but firmer faith
 That every gift of noble origin
 Is breathed upon by Hope's perpetual breath;
 That virtue and the faculties within
 Are vital, and that riches are akin
 To fear, to change, to cowardice, and death!

ENGLAND! the time is come when thou shouldst wean
 Thy heart from its emasculating food;
 The truth should now be better understood;
 Old things have been unsettled; we have seen
 Fair seed-time, better harvest might have been
 But for thy trespasses; and, at this day,
 If for Greece, Egypt, India, Africa,
 Aught good were destined, Thou wouldst step between.
 England! all nations in this charge agree:
 But worse, more ignorant in love and hate,
 Far, far more abject is thine Enemy:
 Therefore the wise pray for thee, though the freight
 Of thy offences be a heavy weight:
 Oh grief! that Earth's best hopes rest all with Thee!

October, 1803

WHEN, looking on the present face of things,
 I see one Man, of Men the meanest too!
 Rais'd up to sway the World, to do, undo,
 With mighty Nations for his Underlings,
 The great events with which old story rings
 Seem vain and hollow; I find nothing great;
 Nothing is left which I can venerate;
 So that almost a doubt within me springs
 Of Providence, such emptiness at length
 Seems at the heart of all things. But, great God!
 I measure back the steps which I have trod,
 And tremble, seeing, as I do, the strength
 Of such poor Instruments, with thoughts sublime
 I tremble at the sorrow of the time.

TO THE MEN OF KENT

October, 1803

VANGUARD of Liberty, ye Men of Kent,
 Ye Children of a Soil that doth advance
 It's haughty brow against the coast of France,
 Now is the time to prove your hardiment!
 To France be words of invitation sent!
 They from their Fields can see the countenance
 Of your fierce war, may ken the glittering lance,
 And hear you shouting forth your brave intent.
 Left single, in bold parley, Ye, of yore,
 Did from the Norman win a gallant wreath;
 Confirm'd the charters that were yours before;—
 No parleying now! In Britain is one breath;
 We all are with you now from Shore to Shore:—
 Ye Men of Kent, 'tis Victory or Death!

ANTICIPATION

October, 1803

SHOUT, for a mighty Victory is won!
 S On British ground the Invaders are laid low;
 The breath of Heaven has drifted them like snow,
 And left them lying in the silent sun,
 Never to rise again!—the work is done.
 Come forth, ye Old Men, now in peaceful show
 And greet your Sons! drums beat, and trumpets blow!
 Make merry, Wives! ye little Children stun
 Your Grandame's ears with pleasure of your noise!
 Clap, Infants, clap your hands! Divine must be
 That triumph, when the very worst, the pain,
 And even the prospect of our Brethren slain,
 Hath something in it which the heart enjoys:—
 In glory will they sleep and endless sanctity.

November, 1806

ANOTHER year!—another deadly blow!
 Another mighty Empire overthrown!
 And we are left, or shall be left, alone;
 The last that dares to struggle with the Foe.
 'Tis well! from this day forward we shall know
 That in ourselves our safety must be sought;
 That by our own right hands it must be wrought,
 That we must stand unpropp'd, or be laid low.
 O Dastard whom such foretaste doth not chear!
 We shall exult, if They who rule the land
 Be Men who hold its many blessings dear,
 Wise, upright, valiant; not a venal Band,
 Who are to judge of danger which they fear,
 And honour which they do not understand.

Moods of My Own Mind

1.

TO A BUTTERFLY

STAY near me—do not take thy flight!
 A little longer stay in sight!
 Much converse do I find in Thee,
 Historian of my Infancy!
 Float near me; do not yet depart!
 Dead times revive in thee:
 Thou bring'st, gay Creature as thou art!
 A solemn image to my heart,
 My Father's Family!

Oh! pleasant, pleasant were the days,
 The time, when in our childish plays
 My sister Emmeline and I
 Together chaced the Butterfly!
 A very hunter did I rush
 Upon the prey:—with leaps and springs
 I follow'd on from brake to bush;
 But She, God love her! feared to brush
 The dust from off its wings.

2.

THE Sun has long been set:
 The Stars are out by twos and threes;
 The little Birds are piping yet
 Among the bushes and trees;
 There's a Cuckoo, and one or two thrushes;
 And a noise of wind that rushes,
 With a noise of water that gushes;
 And the Cuckoo's sovereign cry
 Fills all the hollow of the sky!

Who would go "parading"
 In London, and "masquerading,"
 On such a night of June?
 With that beautiful soft half-moon,
 And all these innocent blisses,
 On such a night as this is!

3.

O NIGHTINGALE! thou surely art
 A Creature of a fiery heart—
 These notes of thine they pierce, and pierce;
 Tumultuous harmony and fierce!
 Thou sing'st as if the God of wine
 Had help'd thee to a Valentine;
 A song in mockery and despite
 Of shades, and dews, and silent Night,
 And steady bliss, and all the Loves
 Now sleeping in these peaceful groves!

I heard a Stockdove sing or say
 His homely tale, this very day.
 His voice was buried among trees,
 Yet to be come at by the breeze:
 He did not cease; but coo'd—and coo'd;
 And somewhat pensively he woo'd:
 He sang of love with quiet blending,
 Slow to begin, and never ending;
 Of serious faith, and inward glee;
 That was the Song, the Song for me!

4.

My heart leaps up when I behold
 A Rainbow in the sky:
 So was it when my life began;
 So is it now I am a Man;
 So be it when I shall grow old,
 Or let me die!

The Child is Father of the Man;
 And I could wish my days to be
 Bound each to each by natural piety.

5.

WRITTEN IN MARCH

WHILE RESTING ON THE BRIDGE AT THE FOOT OF BROTHER'S WATER

THE cock is crowing,
 The stream is flowing,
 The small birds twitter,
 The lake doth glitter,
 The green field sleeps in the sun;
 The oldest and youngest
 Are at work with the strongest;
 The cattle are grazing,
 Their heads never raising;
 There are forty feeding like one!

Like an army defeated
 The Snow hath retreated,
 And now doth fare ill
 On the top of the bare hill;
 The Plough-boy is whooping—anon—anon:
 There's joy in the mountains;
 There's life in the fountains;
 Small clouds are sailing,
 Blue sky prevailing;
 The rain is over and gone!

6.

THE SMALL CELANDINE¹

THERE is a Flower, the Lesser Celandine,
That shrinks, like many more, from cold and rain;
And, the first moment that the sun may shine,
Bright as the sun itself, 'tis out again!

When hailstones have been falling swarm on swarm,
Or blasts the green field and the trees distress'd,
Oft have I seen it muffled up from harm,
In close self-shelter, like a Thing at rest.

But lately, one rough day, this Flower I pass'd,
And recognized it, though an alter'd Form,
Now standing forth an offering to the Blast,
And buffeted at will by Rain and Storm.

I stopp'd, and said with inly muttered voice,
"It doth not love the shower, nor seek the cold:
This neither is it's courage nor it's choice,
But it's necessity in being old.

The sunshine may not bless it, nor the dew;
It cannot help itself in it's decay;
Stiff in it's members, wither'd, changed of hue."
And, in my spleen, I smiled that it was grey.

To be a Prodigal's Favorite—then, worse truth,
A Miser's Pensioner—behold our lot!
O Man! that from thy fair and shining youth
Age might but take the things Youth needed not!

7.

IWANDERED lonely as a Cloud
That floats on high o'er Vales and Hills,
When all at once I saw a crowd
A host of dancing Daffodills;
Along the Lake, beneath the trees,
Ten thousand dancing in the breeze.

¹ See p. 505.

The waves beside them danced, but they
 Outdid the sparkling waves in glee:—
 A Poet could not but be gay
 In such a laughing company:
 I gaz'd—and gaz'd—but little thought
 What wealth the shew to me had brought:

For oft when on my couch I lie
 In vacant or in pensive mood,
 They flash upon that inward eye
 Which is the bliss of solitude,
 And then my heart with pleasure fills,
 And dances with the Daffodills.

8

WHO fancied what a pretty sight
 This Rock would be if edged around
 With living Snowdrops? circlet bright!
 How glorious to this Orchard ground!
 Who loved the little Rock, and set
 Upon its Head this Coronet?

Was it the humour of a Child?
 Or rather of some love-sick Maid,
 Whose brows, the day that she was styled
 The Shepherd Queen were thus arrayed?
 Of Man mature, or Matron sage?
 Or old Man toying with his age?

I ask'd—'twas whisper'd, The device
 To each or all might well belong.
 It is the Spirit of Paradise
 That prompts such work, a Spirit strong,
 That gives to all the self-same bent
 Where life is wise and innocent.

THE SPARROW'S NEST

Look, five blue eggs are gleaming there!
 Few visions have I seen more fair,
 Nor many prospects of delight
 More pleasing than that simple sight!
 I started seeming to espy
 The home and shelter'd bed,
 The Sparrow's dwelling, which, hard by
 My Father's House, in wet or dry,
 My Sister Emmeline and I
 Together visited.

She look'd at it as if she fear'd it;
 Still wishing, dreading to be near it:
 Such heart was in her, being then
 A little Prattler among men.
 The Blessing of my later years
 Was with me when a Boy;
 She gave me eyes, she gave me ears;
 And humble cares, and delicate fears;
 A heart, the fountain of sweet tears;
 And love, and thought, and joy.

GIPSIES

YET are they here?—the same unbroken knot
 Of human Beings, in the self-same spot!
 Men, Women, Children, yea the frame
 Of the whole Spectacle the same!
 Only their fire seems bolder, yielding light:
 Now deep and red, the colouring of night;
 That on their Gipsy-faces falls,
 Their bed of straw and blanket-walls.

—Twelve hours, twelve bounteous hours, are gone while I
 Have been a Traveller under open sky,
 Much witnessing of change and chear,
 Yet as I left I find them here!

The weary Sun betook himself to rest.
 —Then issued Vesper from the fulgent West,
 Outshining like a visible God
 The glorious path in which he trod.
 And now, ascending, after one dark hour,
 And one night's diminution of her power,
 Behold the mighty Moon! this way
 She looks as if at them—but they
 Regard not her:—oh better wrong and strife
 Better vain deeds or evil than such life!
 The silent Heavens have goings on;
 The stars have tasks—but these have none.

11

TO THE CUCKOO

O BLITHE New-comer! I have heard,
 I hear thee and rejoice:
 O Cuckoo! shall I call thee Bird,
 Or but a wandering Voice?

While I am lying on the grass,
 I hear thy restless shout:
 From hill to hill it seems to pass,
 About, and all about!

To me, no Babbler with a tale
 Of sunshine and of flowers,
 Thou tellest, Cuckoo! in the vale
 Of visionary hours.

Thrice welcome, Darling of the Spring!
 Even yet thou art to me
 No Bird; but an invisible Thing,
 A voice, a mystery.

The same whom in my School-boy days
 I listen'd to; that Cry
 Which made me look a thousand ways;
 In bush, and tree, and sky.

To seek thee did I often rove
Through woods and on the green;
And thou wert still a hope, a love;
Still long'd for, never seen!

And I can listen to thee yet;
Can lie upon the plain
And listen, till I do beget
That golden time again.

O blessed Bird! the earth we pace
Again appears to be
An unsubstantial, faery place;
That is fit home for Thee!

12

TO A BUTTERFLY

I'VE watch'd you now a full half hour,
Self-pois'd upon that yellow flower;
And, little Butterfly! indeed
I know not if you sleep, or feed.
How motionless! not frozen seas
More motionless! and then
What joy awaits you, when the breeze
Hath found you out among the trees,
And calls you forth again!

This plot of Orchard-ground is ours;
My trees they are, my Sister's flowers;
Stop here whenever you are weary,
And rest as in a sanctuary!
Come often to us, fear no wrong;
Sit near us on the bough!
We'll talk of sunshine and of song;
And summer days, when we were young,
Sweet childish days, that were as long
As twenty days are now!

IT is no Spirit who from Heaven hath flown,
 And is descending on his embassy;
 Nor Traveller gone from Earth the Heavens to espy!
 'Tis Hesperus—there he stands with glittering crown,
 First admonition that the sun is down!
 For yet it is broad day-light: clouds pass by;
 A few are near him still—and now the sky,
 He hath it to himself—'tis all his own.
 O most ambitious Star! an inquest wrought
 Within me when I recognised thy light;
 A moment I was startled at the sight:
 And, while I gazed, there came to me a thought
 That I might step beyond my natural race
 As thou seem'st now to do; might one day trace
 Some ground not mine; and, strong her strength above,
 My Soul, an Apparition in the place,
 Tread there, with steps that no one shall reprove!

The Green Linnet

THE May is come again:—how sweet
 To sit upon my Orchard-seat!
 And Birds and Flowers once more to greet,
 My last year's Friends together:
 My thoughts they all by turns employ;
 A whispering Leaf is now my joy,
 And then a Bird will be the toy
 That doth my fancy tether.

One have I mark'd, the happiest Guest
 In all this covert of the blest:
 Hail to Thee, far above the rest
 In joy of voice and pinion,
 Thou, Linnet! in thy green array,
 Presiding Spirit here to-day,
 Dost lead the revels of the May,
 And this is thy dominion.

While Birds, and Butterflies, and Flowers
 Make all one Band of Paramours,
 Thou, ranging up and down the bowers,
 Art sole in thy employment;
 A Life, a Presence like the Air,
 Scattering thy gladness without care,
 Too bless'd with any one to pair,
 Thyself thy own enjoyment.

Upon yon tuft of hazel trees,
 That twinkle to the gusty breeze,
 Behold him perch'd in ecstasies,
 Yet seeming still to hover;
 There! where the flutter of his wings
 Upon his back and body flings
 Shadows and sunny glimmerings,
 That cover him all over.

While thus before my eyes he gleams,
 A Brother of the Leaves he seems;
 When in a moment forth he teems
 His little song in gushes:
 As if it pleas'd him to disdain
 And mock the Form which he did feign,
 While he was dancing with the train
 Of Leaves among the bushes.

To a Young Lady,

WHO HAD BEEN REPROACHED FOR TAKING LONG
 WALKS IN THE COUNTRY

DEAR Child of Nature, let them rail!
 —There is a nest in a green dale,
 A harbour and a hold,
 Where thou a Wife and Friend, shalt see
 Thy own delightful days, and be
 A light to young and old.

There, healthy as a Shepherd-boy,
 As if thy heritage were joy,
 And pleasure were thy trade,

Thou, while thy Babes around thee cling,
Shalt shew us how divine a thing
A Woman may be made.

Thy thoughts and feelings shall not die,
Nor leave thee, when grey hairs are nigh,
A melancholy slave;
But an old age, alive and bright,
And lovely as a Lapland night,
Shall lead thee to thy grave.

*“— Pleasure is spread through the earth
In stray gifts to be claim'd by whoever shall find,”*

By their floating Mill,
Which lies dead and still,
Behold yon Prisoners three!
The Miller with two Dames, on the breast of the Thames;
The Platform is small, but there's room for them all;
And they're dancing merrily.

From the shore come the notes
To their Mill where it floats,
To their House and their Mill tether'd fast;
To the small wooden isle where their work to beguile
They from morning to even take whatever is given;—
And many a blithe day they have past.

In sight of the Spires
All alive with the fires
Of the Sun going down to his rest,
In the broad open eye of the solitary sky,
They dance,—there are three, as jocund as free,
While they dance on the calm river's breast.

Man and Maidens wheel,
They themselves make the Reel,
And their Music's a prey which they seize;
It plays not for them,—what matter! 'tis their's;
And if they had care it had scattered their cares,
While they dance, crying, “Long as ye please!”

They dance not for me,
 Yet mine is their glee!
 Thus pleasure is spread through the earth
 In stray gifts to be claim'd by whoever shall find;
 Thus a rich loving-kindness, redundantly kind,
 Moves all nature to gladness and mirth.

The Showers of the Spring
 Rouze the Birds and they sing;
 If the Wind do but stir for his proper delight,
 Each leaf, that and this, his neighbour will kiss,
 Each Wave, one and t'other, speeds after his Brother;
 They are happy, for that is their right!

Star Gazers

WHAT crowd is this? what have we here! we must not pass it by;
 A Telescope upon its frame, and pointed to the sky:
 Long is it as a Barber's Poll, or Mast of little Boat,
 Some little Pleasure-Skiff, that doth on Thames's waters float.

The Show-man chuses well his place, 'tis Leicester's busy Square;
 And he's as happy in his night, for the heavens are blue and fair;
 Calm, though impatient is the Crowd; Each is ready with the fee,
 And envies him that's looking—what an insight must it be!

Yet, Show-man, where can lie the cause? Shall thy Implement have
 blame,
 A Boaster, that when he is tried, fails, and is put to shame?
 Or is it good as others are, and be their eyes in fault?
 Their eyes, or minds? or, finally, is this resplendent Vault?

Is nothing of that radiant pomp so good as we have here?
 Or gives a thing but small delight that never can be dear?
 The silver Moon with all her Vales, and Hills of mightiest fame,
 Do they betray us when they're seen? and are they but a name?

Or is it rather that Conceit rapacious is and strong,
 And bounty never yields so much but it seems to do her wrong?
 Or is it, that when human Souls a journey long have had,
 And are returned into themselves, they cannot but be sad?

Or must we be constrain'd to think that these Spectators rude,
 Poor in estate, of manners base, men of the multitude,
 Have souls which never yet have ris'n, and therefore prostrate lie?
 No, no, this cannot be—Men thirst for power and majesty!

Does, then, a deep and earnest thought the blissful mind employ
 Of him who gazes, or has gazed? a grave and steady joy,
 That doth reject all shew of pride, admits no outward sign,
 Because not of this noisy world, but silent and divine!

Whatever be the cause, 'tis sure that they who pry and pore
 Seem to meet with little gain, seem less happy than before:
 One after One they take their turns, nor have I one espied
 That doth not slackly go away, as if dissatisfied.

Power of Music

AN Orpheus! An Orpheus!—yes, Faith may grow bold,
 And take to herself all the wonders of old;—
 Near the stately Pantheon you'll meet with the same,
 In the street that from Oxford hath borrowed its name.

His station is there;—and he works on the crowd,
 He sways them with harmony merry and loud;
 He fills with his power all their hearts to the brim—
 Was aught ever heard like his fiddle and him!

What an eager assembly! what an empire is this!
 The weary have life and the hungry have bliss;
 The mourner is cheared, and the anxious have rest;
 And the guilt-burthened Soul is no longer opprest.

As the Moon brightens round her the clouds of the night
 So he where he stands is a center of light;
 It gleams on the face, there, of dusky-faced Jack,
 And the pale-visaged Baker's, with basket on back.

That errand-bound 'Prentice was passing in haste—
 What matter! he's caught—and his time runs to waste—
 The News-man is stopped, though he stops on the fret,
 And the half-breathless Lamp-lighter he's in the net!

The Porter sits down on the weight which he bore;
The Lass with her barrow wheels hither her store;—
If a Thief could be here he might pilfer at ease;
She sees the Musician, 'tis all that she sees!

He stands, back'd by the Wall;—he abates not his din;
His hat gives him vigour, with boons dropping in,
From the Old and the Young, from the Poorest; and there!
The one-pennied Boy has his penny to spare.

O blest are the Hearers and proud be the Hand
Of the pleasure it spreads through so thankful a Band;
I am glad for him, blind as he is!—all the while
If they speak 'tis to praise, and they praise with a smile.

That tall Man, a Giant in bulk and in height,
Not an inch of his body is free from delight;
Can he keep himself still, if he would? oh, not he!
The music stirs in him like wind through a tree.

There's a Cripple who leans on his Crutch; like a Tower
That long has lean'd forward, leans hour after hour!—
A Mother, whose Spirit in fetters is bound,
While she dandles the babe in her arms to the sound.

Now, Coaches and Chariots, roar on like a stream;
Here are twenty souls happy as Souls in a dream:
They are deaf to your murmurs—they care not for you,
Nor what ye are flying, or what ye pursue!

To the Daisy

WITH little here to do or see
Of things that in the great world be,
Sweet Daisy! oft I talk to thee,
For thou art worthy,
Thou unassuming Common-place
Of Nature, with that homely face,
And yet with something of a grace,
Which Love makes for thee!

Oft do I sit by thee at ease,
 And weave a web of similies,
 Loose types of Things through all degrees,
 Thoughts of thy raising:
 And many a fond and idle name
 I give to thee, for praise or blame,
 As is the humour of the game,
 While I am gazing.

A Nun demure of lowly port,
 Or sprightly Maiden of Love's Court,
 In thy simplicity the sport
 Of all temptations;
 A Queen in crown of rubies drest,
 A Starveling in a scanty vest,
 Are all, as seem to suit thee best,
 Thy appellations.

A little Cyclops, with one eye
 Staring to threaten and defy,
 That thought comes next—and instantly
 The freak is over,
 The shape will vanish, and behold!
 A silver Shield with boss of gold,
 That spreads itself, some Faery bold
 In fight to cover.

I see thee glittering from afar;—
 And then thou art a pretty Star,
 Not quite so fair as many are
 In heaven above thee!
 Yet like a star, with glittering crest,
 Self-poised in air thou seem'st to rest;—
 May peace come never to his nest,
 Who shall reprove thee!

Sweet Flower! for by that name at last,
 When all my reveries are past,
 I call thee, and to that cleave fast,
 Sweet silent Creature!
 That breath'st with me in sun and air,

Do thou, as thou art wont, repair
My heart with gladness, and a share
Of thy meek nature!

To the Same Flower

BRIGHT Flower, whose home is every where!
A Pilgrim bold in Nature's care,
And all the long year through the heir
Of joy or sorrow,
Methinks that there abides in thee
Some concord with humanity,
Given to no other Flower I see
The forest thorough!

Is it that Man is soon deprest?
A thoughtless Thing! who, once unblest,
Does little on his memory rest,
Or on his reason,
And Thou would'st teach him how to find
A shelter under every wind,
A hope for times that are unkind
And every season?

Thou wander'st the wide world about,
Uncheck'd by pride or scrupulous doubt,
With friends to greet thee, or without,
Yet pleased and willing;
Meek, yielding to the occasion's call,
And all things suffering from all,
Thy function apostolical
In peace fulfilling.

Sonnet

ADMONITION,

(Intended more particularly for the Perusal of those who may have happened to be enamoured of some beautiful Place of Retreat, in the Country of the Lakes.)

YES, there is holy pleasure in thine eye!
—The lovely Cottage in the guardian nook
Hath stirr'd thee deeply; with its own dear brook,

Its own small pasture, almost its own sky!
 But covet not th' Abode—oh! do not sigh,
 As many do, repining while they look,
 Sighing a wish to tear from Nature's Book
 This blissful leaf, with worst impiety.
 Think what the home would be if it were thine,
 Even thine, though few thy wants!—Roof, window, door,
 The very flowers are sacred to the Poor,
 The roses to the porch which they entwine:
 Yea, all, that now enchants thee, from the day
 On which it should be touch'd, would melt, and melt away!

Sonnet

..... "gives to airy nothing
A local habitation and a name."

THOUGH narrow be that Old Man's cares, and near,
 The poor Old Man is greater than he seems:
 For he hath waking empire, wide as dreams;
 An ample sovereignty of eye and ear.
 Rich are his walks with supernatural chear;
 The region of his inner spirit teems
 With vital sounds, and monitory gleams
 Of high astonishment and pleasing fear.
 He the seven birds hath seen that never part,
 Seen the SEVEN WHISTLERS in their nightly rounds,
 And counted them: and oftentimes will start—
 For overhead are sweeping GABRIEL'S HOUNDS,
 Doom'd, with their impious Lord, the flying Hart
 To chase for ever, on aërial grounds.

A Complaint

THERE is a change—and I am poor;
 Your Love hath been, nor long ago,
 A Fountain at my fond Heart's door,
 Whose only business was to flow;
 And flow it did; not taking heed
 Of its own bounty, or my need.

What happy moments did I count!
 Bless'd was I then all bliss above!
 Now, for this consecrated Fount
 Of murmuring, sparkling, living love,
 What have I? shall I dare to tell?
 A comfortless, and hidden WELL.

A Well of love—it may be deep—
 I trust it is, and never dry:
 What matter? if the Waters sleep
 In silence and obscurity.
 —Such change, and at the very door
 Of my fond Heart, hath made me poor.

I AM not One who much or oft delight
 To season my fireside with personal talk,
 About Friends, who live within an easy walk,
 Or Neighbours, daily, weekly, in my sight:
 And, for my chance-acquaintance, Ladies bright,
 Sons, Mothers, Maidens withering on the stalk,
 These all wear out of me, like Forms, with chalk
 Painted on rich men's floors, for one feast-night.
 Better than such discourse doth silence long,
 Long, barren silence, square with my desire;
 To sit without emotion, hope, or aim,
 By my half-kitchen my half-parlour fire,
 And listen to the flapping of the flame,
 Or kettle, whispering it's faint undersong.

“Yet life,” you say, “is life; we have seen and see,
 And with a living pleasure we describe;
 And fits of sprightly malice do but bribe
 The languid mind into activity.
 Sound sense, and love itself, and mirth and glee,
 Are foster'd by the comment and the gibe.”
 Even be it so: yet still among your tribe,
 Our daily world's true Worldlings, rank not me!
 Children are blest, and powerful; their world lies
 More justly balanced; partly at their feet,

And part far from them:—sweetest melodies
 Are those that are by distance made more sweet;
 Whose mind is but the mind of his own eyes
 He is a Slave; the meanest we can meet!

Wings have we, and as far as we can go
 We may find pleasure: wilderness and wood,
 Blank ocean and mere sky, support that mood
 Which with the lofty sanctifies the low:
 Dreams, books, are each a world; and books, we know,
 Are a substantial world, both pure and good:
 Round these, with tendrils strong as flesh and blood,
 Our pastime and our happiness will grow.
 There do I find a never-failing store
 Of personal themes, and such as I love best;
 Matter wherein right voluble I am:
 Two will I mention, dearer than the rest;
 The gentle Lady, married to the Moor;
 And heavenly Una with her milk-white Lamb.

Nor can I not believe but that hereby
 Great gains are mine: for thus I live remote
 From evil-speaking; rancour, never sought,
 Comes to me not; malignant truth, or lie.
 Hence have I genial seasons, hence have I
 Smooth passions, smooth discourse, and joyous thought:
 And thus from day to day my little Boat
 Rocks in its harbour, lodging peaceably.
 Blessings be with them, and eternal praise,
 Who gave us nobler loves, and nobler cares,
 The Poets, who on earth have made us Heirs
 Of truth and pure delight by heavenly lays!
 Oh! might my name be numbered among theirs,
 Then gladly would I end my mortal days.

YEs! full surely 'twas the Echo,
 Solitary, clear, profound,
 Answering to Thee, shouting Cuckoo!
 Giving to thee Sound for Sound.

Whence the Voice? from air or earth?
This the Cuckoo cannot tell;
But a startling sound had birth,
As the Bird must know full well;

Like the voice through earth and sky
By the restless Cuckoo sent;
Like her ordinary cry,
Like—but oh how different!

Hears not also mortal Life?
Hear not we, unthinking Creatures!
Slaves of Folly, Love, or Strife,
Voices of two different Natures?

Have not We too? Yes we have
Answers, and we know not whence;
Echoes from beyond the grave,
Recogniz'd intelligence?

Such within ourselves we hear
Oft-times, ours though sent from far;
Listen, ponder, hold them dear;
For of God, of God they are!

Song,

AT THE FEAST OF BROUGHAM CASTLE,
UPON THE RESTORATION OF LORD CLIFFORD, THE SHEPHERD,
TO THE ESTATES AND HONOURS OF HIS ANCESTORS

HIGH in the breathless Hall the Minstrel sate,
And Emont's murmur mingled with the Song.—
The words of ancient time I thus translate,
A festal Strain that hath been silent long.

“From Town to Town, from Tower to Tower,
The Red Rose is a gladsome Flower.
Her thirty years of Winter past,
The Red Rose is revived at last;
She lifts her head for endless spring,
For everlasting blossoming!

Both Roses flourish, Red and White.
 In love and sisterly delight
 The two that were at strife are blended,
 And all old sorrows now are ended.—
 Joy! joy to both! but most to her
 Who is the Flower of Lancaster!
 Behold her how She smiles to day
 On this great throng, this bright array!
 Fair greeting doth she send to all
 From every corner of the Hall;
 But, chiefly, from above the Board
 Where sits in state our rightful Lord,
 A Clifford to his own restored.

They came with banner, spear, and shield;
 And it was proved in Bosworth-field.
 Not long the Avenger was withstood,
 Earth help'd him with the cry of blood:
 St. George was for us, and the might
 Of blessed Angels crown'd the right.
 Loud voice the Land hath utter'd forth,
 We loudest in the faithful North:
 Our Fields rejoice, our Mountains ring,
 Our Streams proclaim a welcoming;
 Our Strong-abodes and Castles see
 The glory of their loyalty.
 How glad is Skipton at this hour
 Though she is but a lonely Tower!
 Silent, deserted of her best,
 Without an Inmate or a Guest,
 Knight, Squire, or Yeoman, Page, or Groom;
 We have them at the Feast of Brough'm.
 How glad Pendragon though the sleep
 Of years be on her!—She shall reap
 A taste of this great pleasure, viewing
 As in a dream her own renewing.
 Rejoiced is Brough, right glad I deem
 Beside her little humble Stream;
 And she that keepeth watch and ward
 Her statelier Eden's course to guard;

They both are happy at this hour,
Though each is but a lonely Tower:—
But here is perfect joy and pride
For one fair House by Emont's side,
This day distinguished without peer
To see her Master and to cheer;
Him, and his Lady Mother dear.

Oh! it was a time forlorn
When the Fatherless was born—
Give her wings that she may fly,
Or she sees her Infant die!
Swords that are with slaughter wild
Hunt the Mother and the Child.
Who will take them from the light?
—Yonder is a Man in sight—
Yonder is a House—but where?
No, they must not enter there.
To the Caves, and to the Brooks,
To the Clouds of Heaven she looks;
She is speechless, but her eyes
Pray in ghostly agonies.
Blissful Mary, Mother mild,
Maid and Mother undefiled,
Save a Mother and her Child!

Now Who is he that bounds with joy
On Carrock's side, a Shepherd Boy?
No thoughts hath he but thoughts that pass
Light as the wind along the grass.
Can this be He who hither came
In secret, like a smothered flame?
O'er whom such thankful tears were shed
For shelter, and a poor Man's bread?
God loves the Child; and God hath will'd
That those dear words should be fulfill'd,
The Lady's words, when forc'd away,
The last she to her Babe did say,
"My own, my own, thy Fellow-guest
I may not be; but rest thee, rest,
For lowly Shepherd's life is best!"

Alas! when evil men are strong
 No life is good, no pleasure long.
 The Boy must part from Mosedale's Groves,
 And leave Blencathara's rugged Coves,
 And quit the Flowers that Summer brings
 To Glenderamakin's lofty springs;
 Must vanish, and his careless cheer
 Be turned to heaviness and fear.
 —Give Sir Lancelot Threlkeld praise!
 Hear it, good Man, old in days!
 Thou Tree of covert and of rest
 For this young Bird that is distress,
 Among thy branches safe he lay,
 And he was free to sport and play,
 When Falcons were abroad for prey.

A recreant Harp, that sings of fear
 And heaviness in Clifford's ear!
 I said, when evil Men are strong,
 No life is good, no pleasure long,
 A weak and cowardly untruth!
 Our Clifford was a happy Youth,
 And thankful through a weary time,
 That brought him up to manhood's prime.
 —Again he wanders forth at will,
 And tends a Flock from hill to hill:
 His garb is humble; ne'er was seen
 Such garb with such a noble mien;
 Among the Shepherd-grooms no Mate
 Hath he, a Child of strength and state!
 Yet lacks not friends for solemn glee,
 And a chearful company,
 That learn'd of him submissive ways;
 And comforted his private days.
 To his side the Fallow-deer
 Came, and rested without fear;
 The Eagle, Lord of land and sea,
 Stoop'd down to pay him fealty;
 And both the undying Fish that swim
 Through Bowscale-Tarn did wait on him,
 The pair were Servants of his eye
 In their immortality,

They moved about in open sight,
 To and fro, for his delight.
 He knew the Rocks which Angels haunt
 On the Mountains visitant;
 He hath kenn'd them taking wing:
 And the Caves where Faeries sing
 He hath entered; and been told
 By Voices how Men liv'd of old.
 Among the Heavens his eye can see
 Face of thing that is to be;
 And, if Men report him right,
 He can whisper words of might.
 —Now another day is come,
 Fitter hope, and nobler doom:
 He hath thrown aside his Crook,
 And hath buried deep his Book;
 Armour rusting in his Halls
 On the blood of Clifford calls;—

“Quell the Scot,” exclaims the Lance,
 Bear me to the heart of France,
 Is the longing of the Shield—
 Tell thy name, thou trembling Field;
 Field of death, where'er thou be,
 Groan thou with our victory!
 Happy day, and mighty hour,
 When our Shepherd, in his power,
 Mail'd and hors'd, with lance and sword,
 To his Ancestors restored,
 Like a reappearing Star,
 Like a glory from afar,
 First shall head the Flock of War!”

Alas! the fervent Harper did not know
 That for a tranquil Soul the Lay was framed,
 Who, long compell'd in humble walks to go,
 Was softened into feeling, sooth'd, and tamed.

Love had he found in huts where poor Men lie,
 His daily Teachers had been Woods and Rills,
 The silence that is in the starry sky,
 The sleep that is among the lonely hills.

In him the savage Virtue of the Race,
 Revenge, and all ferocious thoughts were dead:
 Nor did he change; but kept in lofty place
 The wisdom which adversity had bred.

Glad were the Vales, and every cottage hearth;
 The Shepherd Lord was honour'd more and more:
 And, ages after he was laid in earth,
 "The Good Lord Clifford" was the name he bore.

Lines,

COMPOSED AT GRASMERE, DURING A WALK,
 ONE EVENING, AFTER A STORMY DAY,
 THE AUTHOR HAVING JUST READ IN A NEWSPAPER
 THAT THE DISSOLUTION OF MR. FOX WAS HOURLY EXPECTED.

Loud is the Vale! the Voice is up
 With which she speaks when storms are gone,
 A mighty Unison of streams!
 Of all her Voices, One!

Loud is the Vale;—this inland Depth
 In peace is roaring like the Sea;
 Yon Star upon the mountain-top
 Is listening quietly.

Sad was I, ev'n to pain depress'd,
 Importunate and heavy load!
 The Comforter hath found me here,
 Upon this lonely road;

And many thousands now are sad,
 Wait the fulfilment of their fear;
 For He must die who is their Stay,
 Their Glory disappear.

A Power is passing from the earth
 To breathless Nature's dark abyss;
 But when the Mighty pass away
 What is it more than this,

That Man, who is from God sent forth,
Doth yet again to God return?—
Such ebb and flow must ever be,
Then wherefore should we mourn?

Elegiac Stanzas

SUGGESTED BY A PICTURE OF PEELE CASTLE, IN A STORM,
PAINTED BY SIR GEORGE BEAUMONT

I WAS thy Neighbour once, thou rugged Pile!
Four summer weeks I dwelt in sight of thee:
I saw thee every day; and all the while
Thy Form was sleeping on a glassy sea.

So pure the sky, so quiet was the air!
So like, so very like, was day to day!
Whene'er I look'd, thy Image still was there;
It trembled, but it never pass'd away.

How perfect was the calm! it seem'd no sleep;
No mood, which season takes away, or brings:
I could have fancied that the mighty Deep
Was even the gentlest of all gentle Things.

Ah! THEN, if mine had been the Painter's hand,
To express what then I saw; and add the gleam,
The light that never was, on sea or land,
The consecration, and the Poet's dream;

I would have planted thee, thou hoary Pile!
Amid a world how different from this!
Beside a sea that could not cease to smile;
On tranquil land, beneath a sky of bliss:

Thou shouldst have seem'd a treasure-house, a mine
Of peaceful years; a chronicle of heaven:—
Of all the sunbeams that did ever shine
The very sweetest had to thee been given.

A Picture had it been of lasting ease,
Elysian quiet, without toil or strife;
No motion but the moving tide, a breeze,
Or merely silent Nature's breathing life.

Such, in the fond delusion of my heart,
Such Picture would I at that time have made:
And seen the soul of truth in every part;
A faith, a trust, that could not be betray'd.

So once it would have been,—'tis so no more;
I have submitted to a new controul:
A power is gone, which nothing can restore;
A deep distress hath humaniz'd my Soul.

Not for a moment could I now behold
A smiling sea and be what I have been:
The feeling of my loss will ne'er be old;
This, which I know, I speak with mind serene.

Then, Beaumont, Friend! who would have been the
Friend,
If he had lived, of Him whom I deplore,
This Work of thine I blame not, but commend;
This sea in anger, and that dismal shore.

Oh 'tis a passionate Work!—yet wise and well;
Well chosen is the spirit that is here;
That Hulk which labours in the deadly swell,
This rueful sky, this pageantry of fear!

And this huge Castle, standing here sublime,
I love to see the look with which it braves,
Cased in the unfeeling armour of old time,
The light'ning, the fierce wind, and trampling waves.

Farewell, farewell the Heart that lives alone,
Hous'd in a dream, at distance from the Kind!
Such happiness, wherever it be known,
Is to be pitied; for 'tis surely blind.

But welcome fortitude, and patient chear,
And frequent sights of what is to be born!
Such sights, or worse, as are before me here.—
Not without hope we suffer and we mourn.

Ode

[INTIMATIONS OF IMMORTALITY FROM RECOLLECTIONS OF EARLY CHILDHOOD]

THERE was a time when meadow, grove, and stream,
The earth, and every common sight,
To me did seem
Apparell'd in celestial light,
The glory and the freshness of a dream.
It is not now as it has been of yore;—
Turn wheresoe'er I may,
By night or day,
The things which I have seen I now can see no more.

The Rainbow comes and goes,
And lovely is the Rose,
The Moon doth with delight
Look round her when the heavens are bare;
Waters on a starry night
Are beautiful and fair;
The sunshine is a glorious birth;
But yet I know, where'er I go,
That there hath pass'd away a glory from the earth.

Now, while the Birds thus sing a joyous song,
And while the young Lambs bound
As to the tabor's sound,
To me alone there came a thought of grief:
A timely utterance gave that thought relief,
And I again am strong.

The Cataracts blow their trumpets from the steep,
No more shall grief of mine the season wrong;
I hear the Echoes through the mountains throng,
The Winds come to me from the fields of sleep,
And all the earth is gay,
Land and sea

Give themselves up to jollity,
 And with the heart of May
 Doth every Beast keep holiday,
 Thou Child of Joy
 Shout round me, let me hear thy shouts, thou happy
 Shepherd Boy!

Ye blessed Creatures, I have heard the call
 Ye to each other make; I see
 The heavens laugh with you in your jubilee;
 My heart is at your festival,
 My head hath it's coronal,
 The fullness of your bliss, I feel—I feel it all.
 Oh evil day! if I were sullen
 While the Earth herself is adorning,
 This sweet May-morning,
 And the Children are pulling,
 On every side,
 In a thousand vallies far and wide,
 Fresh flowers; while the sun shines warm,
 And the Babe leaps up on his mother's arm:—
 I hear, I hear, with joy I hear!
 —But there's a Tree, of many one,
 A single Field which I have look'd upon,
 Both of them speak of something that is gone:
 The Pansy at my feet
 Doth the same tale repeat:
 Whither is fled the visionary gleam?
 Where is it now, the glory and the dream?

Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting:
 The Soul that rises with us, our life's Star,
 Hath had elsewhere it's setting,
 And cometh from afar:
 Not in entire forgetfulness,
 And not in utter nakedness,
 But trailing clouds of glory do we come
 From God, who is our home:
 Heaven lies about us in our infancy!
 Shades of the prison-house begin to close
 Upon the growing Boy,

But He beholds the light, and whence it flows,
 He sees it in his joy;
 The Youth, who daily farther from the East
 Must travel, still is Nature's Priest,
 And by the vision splendid
 Is on his way attended;
 At length the Man perceives it die away,
 And fade into the light of common day.

Earth fills her lap with pleasures of her own;
 Yearnings she hath in her own natural kind,
 And, even with something of a Mother's mind,
 And no unworthy aim,
 The homely Nurse doth all she can
 To make her Foster-child, her Inmate Man,
 Forget the glories he hath known,
 And that imperial palace whence he came.

Behold the Child among his new-born blisses,
 A four year's Darling of a pigmy size!
 See, where mid work of his own hand he lies,
 Fretted by sallies of his Mother's kisses,
 With light upon him from his Father's eyes!
 See, at his feet, some little plan or chart,
 Some fragment from his dream of human life,
 Shap'd by himself with newly-learned art;
 A wedding or a festival,
 A mourning or a funeral;
 And this hath now his heart,
 And unto this he frames his song:
 Then will he fit his tongue
 To dialogues of business, love, or strife;
 But it will not be long
 Ere this be thrown aside,
 And with new joy and pride
 The little Actor cons another part,
 Filling from time to time his "humourous stage"
 With all the Persons, down to palsied Age,
 That Life brings with her in her Equipage;
 As if his whole vocation
 Were endless imitation.

Thou, whose exterior semblance doth belie
 Thy Soul's immensity;
 Thou best Philosopher, who yet dost keep
 Thy heritage, thou Eye among the blind,
 That, deaf and silent, read'st the eternal deep,
 Haunted for ever by the eternal mind,—
 Mighty Prophet! Seer blest!
 On whom those truths do rest,
 Which we are toiling all our lives to find;
 Thou, over whom thy Immortality
 Broods like the Day, a Master o'er a Slave,
 A Presence which is not to be put by;
 To whom the grave
 Is but a lonely bed without the sense or sight
 Of day or the warm light,
 A place of thought where we in waiting lie;
 Thou little Child, yet glorious in the might
 Of untam'd pleasures, on thy Being's height,
 Why with such earnest pains dost thou provoke
 The Years to bring the inevitable yoke,
 Thus blindly with thy blessedness at strife?
 Full soon thy Soul shall have her earthly freight,
 And custom lie upon thee with a weight,
 Heavy as frost, and deep almost as life!

O joy! that in our embers
 Is something that doth live,
 That nature yet remembers
 What was so fugitive!
 The thought of our past years in me doth breed
 Perpetual benedictions: not indeed
 For that which is most worthy to be blest;
 Delight and liberty, the simple creed
 Of Childhood, whether fluttering or at rest,
 With new-born hope for ever in his breast:—
 Not for these I raise
 The song of thanks and praise;
 But for those obstinate questionings
 Of sense and outward things,
 Fallings from us, vanishings;
 Blank misgivings of a Creature

Moving about in worlds not realiz'd,
High instincts, before which our mortal Nature
Did tremble like a guilty Thing surpriz'd:

But for those first affections,
Those shadowy recollections,

Which, be they what they may,
Are yet the fountain light of all our day,
Are yet a master light of all our seeing;

Uphold us, cherish us, and make
Our noisy years seem moments in the being
Of the eternal Silence: truths that wake,
To perish never;

Which neither listlessness, nor mad endeavour,
Nor Man nor Boy,

Nor all that is at enmity with joy,
Can utterly abolish or destroy!

Hence, in a season of calm weather,
Though inland far we be,
Our Souls have sight of that immortal sea
Which brought us hither,
Can in a moment travel thither,
And see the Children sport upon the shore,
And hear the mighty waters rolling evermore.

Then, sing ye Birds, sing, sing a joyous song!
And let the young Lambs bound
As to the tabor's sound!

We in thought will join your throng,
Ye that pipe and ye that play,
Ye that through your hearts to day
Feel the gladness of the May!

What though the radiance which was once so bright
Be now for ever taken from my sight,

Though nothing can bring back the hour
Of splendour in the grass, of glory in the flower;

We will grieve not, rather find
Strength in what remains behind,
In the primal sympathy
Which having been must ever be,
In the soothing thoughts that spring
Out of human suffering,

In the faith that looks through death,
In years that bring the philosophic mind.

And oh ye Fountains, Meadows, Hills, and Groves,
Think not of any severing of our loves!
Yet in my heart of hearts I feel your might;
I only have relinquish'd one delight
To live beneath your more habitual sway.
I love the Brooks which down their channels fret,
Even more than when I tripp'd lightly as they;
The innocent brightness of a new-born Day
Is lovely yet;

The Clouds that gather round the setting sun
Do take a sober colouring from an eye
That hath kept watch o'er man's mortality;
Another race hath been, and other palms are won.
Thanks to the human heart by which we live,
Thanks to its tenderness, its joys, and fears,
To me the meanest flower that blows can give
Thoughts that do often lie too deep for tears.

[EXTRACTS FROM]
THE CONVENTION OF CINTRA

The Cintra Convention was signed on 30 August 1808 after the Suspension of Arms agreed upon between Sir Arthur Wellesley and General Kellermann had been signed on 22 August. After English rejoicing at the cessation of hostilities came bewilderment at the insult to Portugal. Four clauses caused especial indignation: Article IV of the Suspension of Arms: "The General-in-Chief of the English army undertakes to include the Portuguese armies in this suspension of arms . . . [without consultation]"; Article II of the Convention: "The French troops shall evacuate Portugal with their arms and baggage; they shall not be considered as prisoners of war, and, on their arrival in France, they shall be at liberty to serve"; Article III: "The English Government shall furnish the means of conveyance for the French army"; Article XIV: "Should there arise doubts as to the meaning of any article, it will be explained favourably to the French army."

This was the background to Wordsworth's two essays which appeared in *The Courier* of December 1808 and January 1809. He resolved to combine them in a long pamphlet but it did not appear until May 1809. From that edition extracts consisting of about one eighth of the pamphlet are here reprinted.

[EXTRACTS]

CONCERNING THE RELATIONS OF
GREAT BRITAIN, SPAIN, AND PORTUGAL, TO EACH OTHER,
AND TO THE COMMON ENEMY, AT THIS CRISIS;
AND SPECIFICALLY AS AFFECTED BY THE

CONVENTION OF CINTRA:

THE WHOLE BROUGHT TO THE TEST OF THOSE PRINCIPLES,
BY WHICH ALONE THE INDEPENDENCE
AND FREEDOM OF NATIONS CAN BE PRESERVED OR RECOVERED

Qui didicit patriæ quid debeat;——
Quod sit conscripti, quod judicis officium; quæ
Partes in bellum missi ducis.

THE Convention, recently concluded by the Generals at the head of the British army in Portugal, is one of the most important events of our time. It would be deemed so in France, if the Ruler of that country could dare to make it public with those merely of its known bearings and dependences with which the English people are acquainted; it has been deemed so in Spain and Portugal as far as the people of those countries have been permitted to gain, or have gained, a knowledge of it; and what this nation has felt and still feels upon the subject is sufficiently manifest. Wherever the tidings were communicated, they carried agitation along with them—a conflict of sensations in which, though sorrow was predominant, yet, through force of scorn, impatience, hope, and indignation, and through the universal participation in passions so complex, and the sense of power which this necessarily included—the whole partook of the energy and activity of congratulation and joy. Not a street, not a public room, not a fire-side in the island which was not disturbed as by a local or private trouble; men of all estates, conditions, and tempers were affected apparently in equal degrees. Yet was the event by none received as an open and measurable affliction: it had indeed features bold and intelligible to every one; but there was an under-expression which was strange, dark, and mysterious—and, accordingly as different notions prevailed, or the object was looked at in different points of view, we were astonished like men who are overwhelmed without forewarning—fearful like men who feel themselves to be helpless, and indignant and angry like men who are betrayed. In a word, it would not be too much to

say that the tidings of this event did not spread with the commotion of a storm which sweeps visibly over our heads, but like an earthquake which rocks the ground under our feet.

If I were speaking of things however weighty, that were long past and dwindled in the memory, I should scarcely venture to use this language; but the feelings are of yesterday—they are of to-day; the flower, a melancholy flower it is! is still in blow, nor will, I trust, its leaves be shed through months that are to come: for I repeat that the heart of the nation is in this struggle. This just and necessary war, as we have been accustomed to hear it styled from the beginning of the contest in the year 1793, had, some time before the Treaty of Amiens, viz. after the subjugation of Switzerland, and not till then, begun to be regarded by the body of the people, as indeed both just and necessary; and this justice and necessity were by none more clearly perceived, or more feelingly bewailed, than by those who had most eagerly opposed the war in its commencement, and who continued most bitterly to regret that this nation had ever borne a part in it. Their conduct was herein consistent: they proved that they kept their eyes steadily fixed upon principles; for, though there was a shifting or transfer of hostility in their minds as far as regarded persons, they only combated the same enemy opposed to them under a different shape; and that enemy was the spirit of selfish tyranny and lawless ambition. This spirit, the class of persons of whom I have been speaking, (and I would now be understood, as associating them with an immense majority of the people of Great Britain, whose affections, notwithstanding all the delusions which had been practised upon them, were, in the former part of the contest, for a long time on the side of their nominal enemies,) this spirit, when it became undeniably embodied in the French government, they wished, in spite of all dangers, should be opposed by war; because peace was not to be procured without submission, which could not but be followed by a communion, of which the word of greeting would be, on the one part, insult,—and, on the other, degradation. The people now wished for war, as their rulers had done before, because open war between nations is a defined and effectual partition, and the sword, in the hands of the good and the virtuous, is the most intelligible symbol of abhorrence. . .

But, from the moment of the rising of the people of the Pyrenean peninsula, there was a mighty change; we were instantaneously animated; and, from that moment, the contest assumed the dignity, which it is not in the power of any thing but hope to bestow: and, if I may dare to transfer language, prompted by a revelation of the state of being that admits not of decay or change, to the concerns and interests of our transitory planet, from that moment "this corruptible put on incorruption, and this mortal put on immortality." This sudden elevation was on no account more welcome—was by nothing more endeared, than by the returning sense which accompanied it of inward liberty and choice, which gratified our moral yearnings, inasmuch as it would give henceforward to our actions as a people, an origination and direction unquestionably moral—as it was free—as it was manifestly in sympathy with the species—as it admitted therefore of fluctuations of generous feeling—of approbation and of complacency. We were intellectualized also in proportion; we looked backward upon the records of the human race with pride, and, instead of being afraid, we delighted to look forward into futurity. It was imagined that this new-born spirit of resistance, rising from the most sacred feelings of the human heart, would diffuse itself through many countries; and not merely for the distant future, but for the present, hopes were entertained as bold as they were disinterested and generous.

... Why did we give our hearts to the present cause of Spain with a fervour and elevation unknown to us in the commencement of the late Austrian or Prussian resistance to France? Because we attributed to the former an heroic temperament which would render their transfer to such domination an evil to human nature itself, and an affrightening perplexity in the dispensations of Providence. But if in oblivion of the prophetic wisdom of their own first leaders in the cause, they are surprised beyond the power of rallying, utterly cast down and manacled by fearful thoughts from the first thunder-storm of defeat in the field, wherein do they differ from the Prussians and Austrians? Wherein are they a PEOPLE, and not a mere army or set of armies? If this be indeed so, what have we to mourn over but our own honourable impetuosity, in hoping where no just ground of hope existed? A nation, without the virtues necessary for the attainment of independence, have failed to attain it. This is all. For little has that man understood the majesty of

true national freedom, who believes that a population, like that of Spain, in a country like that of Spain, may want the qualities needful to fight out their independence, and yet possess the excellencies which render men susceptible of true liberty. The Dutch, the Americans, did possess the former; but it is, I fear, more than doubtful whether the one ever did, or the other ever will, evince the nobler morality indispensable to the latter.

It was not my intention that the subject should at present have been pursued so far. But I have been carried forward by a strong wish to be of use in raising and steadying the minds of my countrymen, an end to which every thing that I shall say hereafter (provided it be true) will contribute. For all knowledge of human nature leads ultimately to repose; and I shall write to little purpose if I do not assist some portion of my readers to form an estimate of the grounds of hope and fear in the present effort of liberty against oppression, in the present or any future struggle which justice will have to maintain against might. In fact, this is my main object, "the sea-mark of my utmost sail:" in order that, understanding the sources of strength and seats of weakness, both in the tyrant and in those who would save or rescue themselves from his grasp, we may act as becomes men who would guard their own liberties, and would draw a good use from the desire which they feel, and the efforts which they are making, to benefit the less favoured part of the family of mankind. With these as my ultimate objects, I have undertaken to examine the Convention of Cintra; and, as an indispensable preparative for forming a right judgment of this event, I have already faithfully exhibited the feelings of the people of Great Britain and of Spain towards each other, and have shewn by what sacred bonds they were united. With the same view, I shall next proceed to shew by what barrier of aversion, scarcely less sacred, the people of the *Peninsula* were divided from their enemies,—their feelings towards them, and their hopes for themselves; trusting, that I have already mitigated the deadening influences of recent calamity, and that the representation I shall frame, in the manner which has been promised, will speak in its true colours and life to the eye and heart of the spectator.

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Many passages might be adduced to prove that the carnage and devastation spread over their land have not afflicted this noble people so deeply as this more searching warfare against the

conscience and the reason. They groan less over the blood which has been shed, than over the arrogant assumptions of beneficence made by him from whose order that blood has flowed. Still to be talking of bestowing and conferring, and to be happy in the sight of nothing but what he thinks he has bestowed or conferred, this, in a man to whom the weakness of his fellows has given great power, is a madness of pride more hideous than cruelty itself. We have heard of Attila and Tamerlane who called themselves the scourges of God, and rejoiced in personating the terrors of Providence; but such monsters do less outrage to the reason than he who arrogates to himself the gentle and gracious attributes of the Deity: for the one acts professedly from the temperance of reason, the other avowedly in the gusts of passion. Through the terrors of the Supreme Ruler of things, as set forth by works of destruction and ruin, we see but darkly; we may reverence the chastisement, may fear it with awe, but it is not natural to incline towards it in love: moreover, devastation passes away—a perishing power among things that perish: whereas to found, and to build, to create and to institute, to bless through blessing, this has to do with objects where we trust we can see clearly,—it reminds us of what we love,—it aims at permanence,—and the sorrow is, (as in the present instance the people of Spain feel) that it may last; that, if the giddy and intoxicated Being who proclaims that he does these things with the eye and through the might of Providence be not overthrown, it will last; that it needs must last:—and therefore would they hate and abhor him and his pride, even if he were not cruel; if he were merely an image of mortal presumption thrust in between them and the piety which is natural to the heart of man; between them and that religious worship which, as authoritatively as his reason forbids idolatry, that same reason commands. Accordingly, labouring under these violations done to their moral nature, they describe themselves, in the anguish of their souls, treated as a people at once dastardly and *insensible*. In the same spirit they make it even matter of complaint, as comparatively a far greater evil, that they have not fallen by the brute violence of open war, but by deceit and perfidy, by a subtle undermining, or contemptuous overthrow of those principles of good faith, through prevalence of which, in some degree, or under some modification or other, families, communities, a people, or any frame of human society, even destroying armies themselves can exist.

But enough of their wrongs; let us now see what were their

consolations, their resolves, and their hopes. First, they neither murmur nor repine; but with genuine religion and philosophy they recognize in these dreadful visitations the ways of a benign Providence, and find in them cause for thankfulness. The Council of Castile exhort the people of Madrid "to cast off their lethargy, and purify their manners, and to acknowledge the calamities which the kingdom and that great capital had endured as a punishment necessary to their correction." General Morla in his address to the citizens of Cadiz thus speaks to them:—"The commotion, more or less violent, which has taken place in the whole peninsula of Spain, has been of eminent service to rouse us from the state of lethargy in which we indulged, and to make us acquainted with our rights, our glory, and the inviolable duty which we owe to our holy religion and our monarch. We wanted some electric stroke to rouse us from our paralytic state of inactivity; we stood in need of a hurricane to clear the atmosphere of the insalubrious vapours with which it was loaded."—The unanimity with which the whole people were affected they rightly deem an indication of wisdom, an authority, and a sanction,—and they refer it to its highest source. "The defence of our country and our king," (says a manifesto of the Junta of Seville) "that of our laws, our religion, and of all the rights of man, trodden down and violated in a manner which is without example, by the Emperor of the French, Napoleon I. and by his troops in Spain, compelled the whole nation to take up arms, and choose itself a form of government; and, in the difficulties and dangers into which the French had plunged it, all, or nearly all the provinces, as it were by the inspiration of heaven, and in a manner little short of miraculous, created Supreme Juntas, delivered themselves up to their guidance, and placed in their hands the rights and the ultimate fate of Spain. The effects have hitherto most happily corresponded with the designs of those who formed them."

With this general confidence, that the highest good may be brought out of the worst calamities, they have combined a solace, which is vouchsafed only to such nations as can recal to memory the illustrious deeds of their ancestors. The names of Pelayo and The Cid are the watch-words of the address to the people of Leon; and they are told that to these two deliverers of their country, and to the sentiments of enthusiasm which they excited in every breast, Spain owes the glory and happiness which she has *so long* enjoyed. The Biscayans are called to cast their eyes upon the ages which are past, and they will see their ancestors at one time repulsing the

Carthaginians, at another destroying the hordes of Rome; at one period was granted to them the distinction of serving in the van of the army; at another the privilege of citizens. "Imitate," says the address, "the glorious example of your worthy progenitors." The Asturians, the Gallicians, and the city of Cordova, are exhorted in the same manner. And surely to a people thus united in their minds with the heroism of years which have been long departed, and living under such obligation of gratitude to their ancestors, it is not difficult, nay it is natural, to take upon themselves the highest obligations of duty to their posterity; to enjoy in the holiness of imagination the happiness of unborn ages to which they shall have eminently contributed; and that each man, fortified by these thoughts, should welcome despair for himself, because it is the assured mother of hope for his country.

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. . . If then we do not forget that the Spanish and Portuguese Nations stand upon the loftiest ground of principle and passion, and do not suffer on our part those sympathies to languish which a few months since were so strong, and do not negligently or timidly descend from those heights of magnanimity to which as a nation we were raised, when they first represented to us their wrongs and entreated our assistance, and we devoted ourselves sincerely and earnestly to their service, making with them a common cause under a common hope; if we are true in all this to them and to ourselves, we shall not be at a loss to conceive what actions are entitled to our commendation as being in the spirit of a friendship so nobly begun, and tending assuredly to promote the common welfare; and what are abject, treacherous, and pernicious, and therefore to be condemned and abhorred. Is then, I may now ask, the Convention of Cintra an act of this latter kind? Have the Generals, who signed and ratified that agreement, thereby proved themselves unworthy associates in such a cause? And has the Ministry, by whose appointment these men were enabled to act in this manner, and which sanctioned the Convention by permitting them to carry it into execution, thereby taken to itself a weight of guilt, in which the Nation must feel that it participates, until the transaction shall be solemnly reprobated by the Government, and the remote and immediate authors of it brought to merited punishment?

I shall now proceed to facts. The dispatches of Sir Arthur Wellesley, containing an account of his having defeated the enemy in two several engagements, spread joy through the nation. The latter action appeared to have been decisive, and the result may be thus briefly reported, in a never to be forgotten sentence of Sir Arthur's second letter. "In this action," says he, "in which the whole of the French force in Portugal was employed, under the command of the Duc D'ABRANTES in person, in which the enemy was certainly superior in cavalry and artillery, and in which not more than half of the British army was actually engaged, he sustained a signal defeat, and has lost thirteen pieces of cannon, &c. &c." In the official communication, made to the public of these dispatches, it was added, that "a General officer had arrived at the British head-quarters to treat for terms." This was joyful intelligence! First, an immediate, effectual, and honourable deliverance of Portugal was confidently expected: secondly, the humiliation and captivity of a large French army, and just punishment, from the hands of the Portuguese government, of the most atrocious offenders in that army and among those who, having held civil offices under it, (especially if Portuguese) had, in contempt of all law, civil and military, notoriously abused the power which they had treasonably accepted: thirdly, in this presumed surrender of the army, a diminution of the enemy's military force was looked to, which, after the losses he had already sustained in Spain, would most sensibly weaken it: and lastly, and far above this, there was an anticipation of a shock to his power, where that power is strongest, in the imaginations of men, which are sure to fall under the bondage of long-continued success. The judicious part of the nation fixed their attention chiefly on these results, and they had good cause to rejoice. . .

Sir Arthur Wellesley's dispatches had appeared in the Gazette on the 2d of September, and on the 16th of the same month suspense was put an end to by the publication of Sir Hew Dalrymple's letter, accompanied with the Armistice and Convention. The night before, by order of ministers, an attempt had been made at rejoicing, and the Park and Tower guns had been fired in sign of good news.—Heaven grant that the ears of that great city may be preserved from such another outrage! As soon as the truth was known, never was there such a burst of rage and indignation—such an overwhelming of

stupefaction and sorrow, But I will not, I cannot dwell upon it—it is enough to say, that Sir Hew Dalrymple and Sir Arthur Wellesley must be bold men if they can think of what must have been reported to them without awe and trembling; the heart of their country was turned against them, and they were execrated in bitterness.

For they had changed all things into their contraries, hope into despair; triumph into defeat; confidence into treachery, which left no place to stand upon; justice into the keenest injury.—Whom had they delivered but the Tyrant in captivity? Whose hands had they bound but those of their Allies, who were able of themselves to have executed their own purposes? Whom had they punished but the innocent sufferer? Whom rewarded but the guiltiest of Oppressors? They had reversed every thing:—favour and honour for their enemies—insult for their friends—and robbery (they had both protected the person of the robber and secured to him his booty) and opprobrium for themselves;—to those over whom they had been masters, who had crouched to them by an open act of submission, they had made themselves servants, turning the British Lion into a beast of burthen, to carry a vanquished enemy, with his load of iniquities, when and whither it had pleased him.

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It is indeed deplorable, that our Generals, from this infirmity, or from any other cause, did not assume that lofty deportment which the character and relative strength of the two armies authorized them, and the nature of the service upon which they were sent, enjoined them to assume;—that they were in such haste to treat—that, with such an enemy (let me say at once,) and in such circumstances, they should have treated at all. Is it possible that they could ever have asked themselves who that enemy was, how he came into that country, and what he had done there? From the manifesto of the Portuguese government, issued at Rio Janeiro, and from other official papers, they might have learned, what was notorious to all Europe, that this body of men commissioned by Bonaparte, in the time of profound peace, without a declaration of war, had invaded Portugal under the command of Junot, who had perfidiously entered the country, as the General of a friendly and allied Power, assuring the people, as he advanced, that he came to protect their Sovereign against an invasion of the English; and that, when in this manner he had entered a peaceable kingdom, which offered no

resistance, and had expelled its lawful Sovereign, he wrung from it unheard-of contributions, ravaged it, cursed it with domestic pillage and open sacrilege; and that, when this unoffending people, unable to endure any longer, rose up against the tyrant, he had given their towns and villages to the flames, and put the whole country, thus resisting, under military execution.—Setting aside all natural sympathy with the Portuguese and Spanish nations, and all prudential considerations of regard or respect for *their feelings* towards these men, and for *their expectations* concerning the manner in which they ought to be dealt with, it is plain that the French had forfeited by their crimes all right to those privileges, or to those modes of intercourse, which one army may demand from another according to the laws of war. They were not soldiers in any thing but the power of soldiers, and the outward frame of an army. During their occupation of Portugal, the laws and customs of war had never been referred to by them, but as a plea for some enormity, to the aggravated oppression of that unhappy country! Pillage, sacrilege, and murder—sweeping murder and individual assassination, had been proved against them by voices from every quarter. They had outlawed themselves by their offences from membership in the community of war, and from every species of community acknowledged by reason. But even, should any one be so insensible as to question this, he will not at all events deny, that the French ought to have been dealt with as having put on a double character. For surely they never considered themselves merely as an army. They had dissolved the established authorities of Portugal, and had usurped the civil power of the government; and it was in this compound capacity, under this two-fold monstrous shape, that they had exercised, over the religion and property of the country, the most grievous oppressions. What then remained to protect them but their power?—Right they had none,—and power! it is a mortifying consideration, but I will ask if Bonaparte, (nor do I mean in the question to imply any thing to his honour,) had been in the place of Sir Hew Dalrymple, what would he have thought of their power?—Yet before this shadow the solid substance of *justice* melted away.

... I will now proceed to another division of the subject, on which I feel a still more earnest wish to speak; because, though in itself of the highest importance, it has been comparatively neglected;—I

mean the political injustice and moral depravity which are stamped upon the front of this agreement, and pervade every regulation which it contains. I shall shew that our Generals (and with them our Ministers, as far as they might have either given directions to this effect, or have countenanced what has been done)—when it was their paramount duty to maintain at all hazards the noblest principles in unsuspected integrity; because, upon the summons of these, and in defence of them, their Allies had risen, and by these alone could stand—not only did not perform this duty, but descended as far below that level of ordinary principles as they ought to have mounted above it;—imitating not the majesty of the oak with which it lifts its branches towards the heavens, but the vigour with which, in the language of the poet, it strikes its roots downwards towards hell:—

Radice in Tartara tendit.

The Armistice is the basis of the Convention; and in the first article we find it agreed, “That there shall be a suspension of hostilities between the forces of his Britannic Majesty, and those of his Imperial and Royal Majesty, Napoleon I.” I will ask if it be the practice of military officers, in instruments of this kind, to acknowledge, in the person of the head of the government with which they are at war, titles which their own government—for which they are acting—has not acknowledged. If this be the practice, which I will not stop to determine, it is grossly improper; and ought to be abolished. Our Generals, however, had entered Portugal as allies of a Government by which this title had been acknowledged; and they might have pleaded this circumstance in mitigation of their offence; but surely not in an instrument, where we not only look in vain for the name of the Portuguese Sovereign, or of the Government which he appointed, or of any heads or representatives of the Portuguese armies or people as a party in the contract,—but where it is stipulated (in the 4th article) that the British General shall engage to include the Portuguese armies in this Convention. What an outrage!—We enter the Portuguese territory as allies; and, without their consent—or even consulting them, we proceed to form the basis of an agreement, relating—not to the safety or interests of our own army—but to Portuguese territory, Portuguese persons, liberties, and rights,—and engage, out of our own will and power, to include the Portuguese army, they or their Government willing or not, within the obligation of this agreement. I

place these things in contrast, viz. the acknowledgement of Bonaparte as emperor and king, and the utter neglect of the Portuguese Sovereign and Portuguese authorities, to shew in what spirit and temper these agreements were entered upon. I will not here insist upon what was our duty, on this occasion, to the Portuguese—as dictated by those sublime precepts of justice which it has been proved that they and the Spaniards had risen to defend,—and without feeling the force and sanctity of which, they neither could have risen, nor can oppose to their enemy resistance which has any hope in it; but I will ask, of any man who is not dead to the common feelings of his social nature—and besotted in understanding, if this be not a cruel mockery, and which must have been felt, unless it were repelled with hatred and scorn, as a heart-breaking insult. Moreover, this conduct acknowledges, by implication, that principle which by his actions the enemy has for a long time covertly maintained, and now openly and insolently avows in his words—that power is the measure of right;—and it is in a steady adherence to this abominable doctrine that his strength mainly lies. I do maintain then that, as far as the conduct of our Generals in framing these instruments tends to reconcile men to this course of action, and to sanction this principle, they are virtually his Allies: their weapons may be against him, but he will laugh at their weapons,—for he knows, though they themselves do not, that their souls are for him. Look at the preamble to the Armistice! In what is omitted and what is inserted, the French Ruler could not have fashioned it more for his own purpose if he had traced it with his own hand. We have then trampled upon a fundamental principle of justice, and countenanced a prime maxim of iniquity; thus adding, in an unexampled degree, the foolishness of impolicy to the heinousness of guilt. A conduct thus grossly unjust and impolitic, without having the hatred which it inspires neutralised by the contempt, is made contemptible by utterly wanting that colour of right which authority and power, put forth in defence of our Allies—in asserting their just claims and avenging their injuries, might have given. But we, instead of triumphantly displaying our power towards our enemies, have ostentatiously exercised it upon our friends; reversing here, as every where, the practice of sense and reason;—conciliatory even to abject submission where we ought to have been haughty and commanding,—and repulsive and tyrannical where we ought to have been gracious and kind. Even a common law of good breeding would have served us here, had we

known how to apply it. We ought to have endeavoured to raise the Portuguese in their own estimation by concealing our power in comparison with theirs; dealing with them in the spirit of those mild and humane delusions, which spread such a genial grace over the intercourse, and add so much to the influence of love in the concerns of private life. It is a common saying, presume that a man is dishonest, and that is the readiest way to make him so: in like manner it may be said, presume that a nation is weak, and that is the surest course to bring it to weakness,—if it be not roused to prove its strength by applying it to the humiliation of your pride. The Portuguese had been weak; and, in connection with their allies the Spaniards, they were prepared to become strong. It was, therefore, doubly incumbent upon us to foster and encourage them—to look favourably upon their efforts—generously to give them credit upon their promises—to hope with them and for them; and, thus anticipating and foreseeing, we should, by a natural operation of love, have contributed to create the merits which were anticipated and foreseen. I apply these rules, taken from the intercourse between individuals, to the conduct of large bodies of men, or of nations towards each other, because these are nothing but aggregates of individuals; and because the maxims of all just law, and the measures of all sane practice, are only an enlarged or modified application of those dispositions of love and those principles of reason, by which the welfare of individuals, in their connection with each other, is promoted. There was also here a still more urgent call for these courteous and humane principles as guides of conduct; because, in exact proportion to the physical weakness of Governments, and to the distraction and confusion which cannot but prevail, when a people is struggling for independence and liberty, are the well-intentioned and the wise among them remitted for their support to those benign elementary feelings of society, for the preservation and cherishing of which, among other important objects, government was from the beginning ordained.

Therefore, by the strongest obligations, we were bound to be studious of a delicate and respectful bearing towards those ill-fated nations, our allies: and consequently, if the government of the Portuguese, though weak in power, possessed their affections, and was strong in right, it was incumbent upon us to turn our first thoughts to that government—to look for it if it were hidden—to call it forth,—and, by our power combined with that of the people,

to assert its rights. Or, if the government were dissolved and had no existence, it was our duty, in such an emergency, to have resorted to the nation, expressing its will through the most respectable and conspicuous authority, through that which seemed to have the best right to stand forth as its representative. In whatever circumstances Portugal had been placed, the paramount right of the Portuguese nation, or government, to appear not merely as a party but a principal, ought to have been established as a primary position, without the admission of which, all proposals to treat would be peremptorily rejected. . .

In the course of the last thirty years we have seen two wars waged against Liberty—the American war, and the war against the French People in the early stages of their Revolution. In the latter instance the Emigrants and the Continental Powers and the British did, in all their expectations and in every movement of their efforts, manifest a common ignorance—originating in the same source. And, for what more especially belongs to ourselves at this time, we may affirm—that the same presumptuous irreverence of the principles of justice, and blank insensibility to the affections of human nature, which determined the conduct of our government in those two wars *against* liberty, have continued to accompany its exertions in the present struggle *for* liberty,—and have rendered them fruitless. The British government deems (no doubt), on its own part, that its intentions are good. It must not deceive itself: nor must we deceive ourselves. Intentions—thoroughly good—could not mingle with the unblessed actions which we have witnessed. A disinterested and pure intention is a light that guides as well as cheers, and renders desperate lapses impossible.

Our duty is—our aim ought to be—to employ the true means of liberty and virtue for the ends of liberty and virtue. In such policy, thoroughly understood, there is fitness and concord and rational subordination; it deserves a higher name—organization, health, and grandeur. Contrast, in a single instance, the two processes; and the qualifications which they require. The ministers of that period found it an easy task to hire a band of Hessians, and to send it across the Atlantic, that they might assist *in bringing the Americans* (according to the phrase then prevalent) *to reason*. The force, with which these troops would attack, was gross—tangible,—and might be calculated; but the spirit of resistance, which their presence

would create, was subtle—ethereal—mighty—and incalculable. Accordingly, from the moment when these foreigners landed—men who had no interest, no business, in the quarrel, but what the wages of their master bound him to, and he imposed upon his miserable slaves;—nay, from the first rumour of their destination, the success of the British was (as hath since been affirmed by judicious Americans) impossible.

The British government of the present day have been seduced, as we have seen, by the same common-place facilities on the one side; and have been equally blind on the other. A physical auxiliary force of thirty-five thousand men is to be added to the army of Spain: but the moral energy, which thereby *might* be taken away from the principal, is overlooked or slighted; the material being too fine for their calculation. . .

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Of the ultimate independence of the Spanish Nation there is no reason to doubt: and for the immediate furtherance of the good cause, and a throwing-off of the yoke upon the first favourable opportunity by the different tracts of the country upon which it has been re-imposed, nothing is wanting but sincerity on the part of the government towards the provinces which are yet free. The first end to be secured by Spain is riddance of the enemy: the second, permanent independence: and the third, a free constitution of government; which will give their main (though far from sole) value to the other two; and without which little more than a formal independence, and perhaps scarcely that, can be secured. Humanity and honour, and justice, and all the sacred feelings connected with atonement, retribution, and satisfaction; shame that will not sleep, and the sting of unperformed duty; and all the powers of the mind, the memory that broods over the dead and turns to the living, the understanding, the imagination, and the reason;—demand and enjoin that the wanton oppressor should be driven, with confusion and dismay, from the country which he has so heinously abused.

This cannot be accomplished (scarcely can it be aimed at) without an accompanying and an inseparable resolution, in the souls of the Spaniards, to be and remain their own masters; that is, to preserve themselves in the rank of Men; and not become as the Brute that is driven to the pasture, and cares not who owns him. It is a common saying among those who profess to be lovers of civil liberty, and give themselves some credit for understanding it,—that, if a

Nation be not free, it is mere dust in the balance whether the slavery be bred at home, or comes from abroad; be of their own suffering, or of a stranger's imposing. They see little of the underground part of the tree of liberty, and know less of the nature of man, who can think thus. Where indeed there is an indisputable and immeasurable superiority in one nation over another; to be conquered may, in course of time, be a benefit to the inferior nation: and, upon this principle, some of the conquests of the Greeks and Romans may be justified. But in what of really useful or honourable are the French superior to their Neighbours? Never far advanced, and, now barbarizing apace, they may carry—amongst the sober and dignified Nations which surround them—much to be avoided, but little to be imitated.

There is yet another case in which a People may be benefited by resignation or forfeiture of their rights as a separate independent State; I mean, where—of two contiguous or neighbouring countries, both included by nature under one conspicuously defined limit—the weaker is united with, or absorbed into, the more powerful; and one and the same Government is extended over both. This, with due patience and foresight, may (for the most part) be amicably effected, without the intervention of conquest; but—even should a violent course have been resorted to, and have proved successful—the result will be matter of congratulation rather than of regret, if the countries have been incorporated with an equitable participation of natural advantages and civil privileges. Who does not rejoice that former partitions have disappeared,—and that England, Scotland, and Wales, are under one legislative and executive authority; and that Ireland (would that she had been more justly dealt with!) follows the same destiny? The large and numerous Fiefs, which interfered injuriously with the grand demarcation assigned by nature to France, have long since been united and consolidated. The several independent Sovereignities of Italy (a country, the boundary of which is still more expressly traced out by nature; and which has no less the further definition and cement of country which Language prepares) have yet this good to aim at: and it will be a happy day for Europe, when the natives of Italy and the natives of Germany (whose duty is, in like manner, indicated to them) shall each dissolve the pernicious barriers which divide them, and form themselves into a mighty People. But Spain, excepting a free union with Portugal, has no benefit of this kind to look for: she has long since attained it. The

Pyrenees on the one side, and the Sea on every other; the vast extent and great resources of the territory; a population numerous enough to defend itself against the whole world, and capable of great increase; language; and long duration of independence;—point out and command that the two nations of the Peninsula should be united in friendship and strict alliance; and, as soon as it may be effected without injustice, form one independent and indissoluble sovereignty. The Peninsula cannot be protected but by itself; it is too large a tree to be framed by nature for a station among underwoods; it must have power to toss its branches in the wind, and lift a bold forehead to the sun.

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What good can the present arbitrary power confer upon France itself? Let that point be first settled by those who are inclined to look farther. The earlier proceedings of the French Revolution no doubt infused health into the country; something of which survives to this day: but let not the now-existing Tyranny have the credit of it. France neither owes, nor can owe, to this any rational obligation. She has seen decrees without end for the increase of commerce and manufactures; pompous stories without number of harbours, canals, warehouses, and bridges: but there is no worse sign in the management of affairs than when that, which ought to follow as an effect, goes before under a vain notion that it will be a cause.—Let us attend to the springs of action, and we shall not be deceived. The works of peace cannot flourish in a country governed by an intoxicated Despot; the motions of whose distorted benevolence must be still more pernicious than those of his cruelty. “*I have bestowed; I have created; I have regenerated; I have been pleased to organize;*”—this is the language perpetually upon his lips, when his ill-fated activities turn that way. Now commerce, manufactures, agriculture, and all the peaceful arts, are of the nature of virtues or intellectual powers: they cannot be given; they cannot be stuck in here and there; they must spring up; they must grow of themselves: they may be encouraged; they thrive better with encouragement, and delight in it; but the obligation must have bounds nicely defined; for they are delicate, proud, and independent. But a Tyrant has no joy in any thing which is endued with such excellence: he sickens at the sight of it: he turns away from it, as an insult to his own attributes. We have seen the present ruler of France publicly addressed as a Providence upon earth; styled, among innumerable

other blasphemies, the supreme Ruler of things; and heard him say, in his answers, that he approved of the language of those who thus saluted him.—Oh folly to think that plans of reason can prosper under such countenance! If this be the doom of France, what a monster would be the double-headed tyranny of Spain!

It is immutably ordained that power, taken and exercised in contempt of right, never can bring forth good. Wicked actions indeed have oftentimes happy issues: the benevolent œconomy of nature counter-working and diverting evil; and educing finally benefits from injuries; and turning curses to blessings. But I am speaking of good in a direct course. All good in this order—all moral good—begins and ends in reverence of right. The whole Spanish People are to be treated not as a mighty multitude with feeling, will, and judgment; not as rational creatures;—but as objects without reason; in the language of human law, insuperably laid down not as Persons but as Things. Can good come from this beginning; which, in matter of civil government, is the fountain-head and the main feeder of all the pure evil upon earth? . .

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. . . The true sorrow of humanity consists in this;—not that the mind of man fails; but that the course and demands of action and of life so rarely correspond with the dignity and intensity of human desires: and hence that, which is slow to languish, is too easily turned aside and abused. But—with the remembrance of what has been done, and in the face of the interminable evils which are threatened—a Spaniard can never have cause to complain of this, while a follower of the Tyrant remains in arms upon the Peninsula.

Here then they, with whom I *hope*, take their stand. There is a spiritual community binding together the living and the dead; the good, the brave, and the wise, of all ages. We would not be rejected from this community: and therefore do we hope. We look forward with erect mind, thinking and feeling: it is an obligation of duty: take away the sense of it, and the moral being would die within us. . .

ESSAY UPON EPITAPHS

Essay Upon Epitaphs was first published in Coleridge's journal *The Friend* on 22 February 1810. It was printed as a note to *The Excursion*, Book V, in 1814, and that text has been used here.

Wordsworth wrote two more essays on this subject for *The Friend*, but they were not printed before the journal ceased publication, and were published for the first time by Grosart in the *Prose Works* (1876), II, 41-75.

ESSAY UPON EPITAPHS

IT needs scarcely be said, that an Epitaph presupposes a Monument, upon which it is to be engraven. Almost all Nations have wished that certain external signs should point out the places where their Dead are interred. Among savage Tribes unacquainted with Letters, this has mostly been done either by rude stones placed near the Graves, or by Mounds of earth raised over them. This custom proceeded obviously from a twofold desire; first, to guard the remains of the deceased from irreverent approach or from savage violation; and, secondly, to preserve their memory. “Never any,” says Cambden, “neglected burial but some savage Nations; as the Bactrians which cast their dead to the dogs; some varlet Philosophers, as Diogenes, who desired to be devoured of fishes; some dissolute Courtiers, as Mecænas, who was wont to say, *Non tumulum curo; sepelit natura relictos.*”

I’m careless of a Grave:—Nature her dead will save.”

As soon as Nations had learned the use of letters, Epitaphs were inscribed upon these Monuments; in order that their intention might be more surely and adequately fulfilled. I have derived Monuments and Epitaphs from two sources of feeling: but these do in fact resolve themselves into one. The invention of Epitaphs, Weever, in his discourse of funeral Monuments, says rightly, “proceeded from the presage or fore-feeling of Immortality, implanted in all men naturally, and is referred to the Scholars of Linus the Theban Poet, who flourished about the year of the World two thousand seven hundred; who first bewailed this Linus their Master, when he was slain, in doleful verses then called of him *Œlina*, afterwards *Epitaphia*, for that they were first sung at burials, after engraved upon the Sepulchres.”

And, verily, without the consciousness of a principle of Immortality in the human soul, Man could never have had awakened in him the desire to live in the remembrance of his fellows; mere love, or the yearning of Kind towards Kind, could not have produced it. The Dog or Horse perishes in the field, or in the stall, by the side of his Companions, and is incapable of anticipating the sorrow with which his surrounding Associates shall bemoan his death, or pine for his loss; he cannot pre-conceive this regret, he can form no thought of it; and therefore cannot possibly have a desire to leave such

regret or remembrance behind him. Add to the principle of love, which exists in the inferior animals, the faculty of reason which exists in Man alone; will the conjunction of these account for the desire? Doubtless it is a necessary consequence of this conjunction; yet not I think as a direct result, but only to be come at through an intermediate thought, viz. that of an intimation or assurance within us, that some part of our nature is imperishable. At least the precedence, in order of birth, of one feeling to the other, is unquestionable. If we look back upon the days of childhood, we shall find that the time is not in remembrance when, with respect to our own individual Being, the mind was without this assurance; whereas, the wish to be remembered by our Friends or Kindred after Death, or even in Absence, is, as we shall discover, a sensation that does not form itself till the *social* feelings have been developed, and the Reason has connected itself with a wide range of objects. Forlorn, and cut off from communication with the best part of his nature, must that Man be, who should derive the sense of immortality, as it exists in the mind of a Child, from the same unthinking gaiety or liveliness of animal Spirits with which the Lamb in the meadow, or any other irrational Creature, is endowed; who should ascribe it, in short, to blank ignorance in the Child; to an inability arising from the imperfect state of his faculties to come, in any point of his being, into contact with a notion of Death; or to an unreflecting acquiescence in what had been instilled into him! Has such an unfold of the mysteries of Nature, though he may have forgotten his former self, ever noticed the early, obstinate, and unappeasable inquisitiveness of Children upon the subject of origination? This single fact proves outwardly the monstrosity of those suppositions: for, if we had no direct external testimony that the minds of very young Children meditate feelingly upon Death and Immortality, these inquiries, which we all know they are perpetually making concerning the *whence*, do necessarily include correspondent habits of interrogation concerning the *whither*. Origin and tendency are notions inseparably co-relative. Never did a Child stand by the side of a running Stream, pondering within himself what power was the feeder of the perpetual current, from what never-wearied sources the body of water was supplied, but he must have been inevitably propelled to follow this question by another: "towards what abyss is it in progress? what receptacle can contain the mighty influx? And the spirit of the answer must have been, though the word might be Sea or Ocean, accompanied

perhaps with an image gathered from a Map, or from the real object in Nature—these might have been the *letter*, but the *spirit* of the answer must have been *as* inevitably,—a receptacle without bounds or dimensions;—nothing less than infinity. We may, then, be justified in asserting that the sense of Immortality, if not a co-existent and twin birth with Reason, is among the earliest of her Offspring: and we may further assert, that from these conjoined, and under their countenance, the human affections are gradually formed and opened out. This is not the place to enter into the recesses of these investigations; but the subject requires me here to make a plain avowal that, for my own part, it is to me inconceivable, that the sympathies of love towards each other, which grow with our growth, could ever attain any new strength, or even preserve the old, after we had received from the outward senses the impression of Death, and were in the habit of having that impression daily renewed and its accompanying feeling brought home to ourselves, and to those we love; if the same were not counteracted by those communications with our internal Being, which are anterior to all these experiences, and with which revelation coincides, and has through that coincidence alone (for otherwise it could not possess it) a power to affect us. I confess, with me the conviction is absolute, that, if the impression and sense of Death were not thus counterbalanced, such a hollowness would pervade the whole system of things, such a want of correspondence and consistency, a disproportion so astounding betwixt means and ends, that there could be no repose, no joy. Were we to grow up unfostered by this genial warmth, a frost would chill the spirit, so penetrating and powerful, that there could be no motions of the life of love; and infinitely less could we have any wish to be remembered after we had passed away from a world in which each man had moved about like a shadow.—If, then, in a Creature endowed with the faculties of foresight and reason, the social affections could not have unfolded themselves uncountenanced by the faith that Man is an immortal being; and if, consequently, neither could the individual dying have had a desire to survive in the remembrance of his fellows, nor on their side could they have felt a wish to preserve for future times vestiges of the departed; it follows, as a final inference, that without the belief in Immortality, wherein these several desires originate, neither monuments nor epitaphs, in affectionate or laudatory commemoration of the Deceased, could have existed in the world.

Simonides, it is related, upon landing in a strange Country,

found the Corse of an unknown person lying by the Sea-side; he buried it, and was honoured throughout Greece for the piety of that Act. Another ancient Philosopher, chancing to fix his eyes upon a dead Body, regarded the same with slight, if not with contempt; saying, "see the Shell of the flown Bird!" But it is not to be supposed that the moral and tender-hearted Simonides was incapable of the lofty movements of thought, to which that other Sage gave way at the moment while his soul was intent only upon the indestructible being; nor, on the other hand, that he, in whose sight a lifeless human Body was of no more value than the worthless Shell from which the living fowl had departed, would not, in a different mood of mind, have been affected by those earthly considerations which had incited the philosophic Poet to the performance of that pious duty. And with regard to this latter, we may be assured that, if he had been destitute of the capability of communing with the more exalted thoughts that appertain to human Nature, he would have cared no more for the Corse of the Stranger than for the dead body of a Seal or Porpoise which might have been cast up by the Waves. We respect the corporeal frame of Man, not merely because it is the habitation of a rational, but of an immortal Soul. Each of these Sages was in Sympathy with the best feelings of our Nature; feelings which, though they seem opposite to each other, have another and a finer connection than that of contrast.—It is a connection formed through the subtle process by which, both in the natural and the moral world, qualities pass insensibly into their contraries, and things revolve upon each other. As, in sailing upon the orb of this Planet, a voyage, towards the regions where the sun sets, conducts gradually to the quarter where we have been accustomed to behold it come forth at its rising; and, in like manner, a voyage towards the east, the birth-place in our imagination of the morning, leads finally to the quarter where the Sun is last seen when he departs from our eyes; so, the contemplative Soul, travelling in the direction of mortality, advances to the Country of everlasting Life; and, in like manner, may she continue to explore those cheerful tracts, till she is brought back, for her advantage and benefit, to the land of transitory things—of sorrow and of tears.

On a midway point, therefore, which commands The thoughts and feelings of the two Sages whom we have represented in contrast, does the Author of that species of composition, the Laws of which it is our present purpose to explain, take his stand. Accord-

ingly, recurring to the twofold desire of guarding the Remains of the deceased and preserving their memory, it may be said, that a sepulchral Monument is a tribute to a Man as a human Being; and that an Epitaph (in the ordinary meaning attached to the word) includes this general feeling and something more; and is a record to preserve the memory of the dead, as a tribute due to his individual worth, for a satisfaction to the sorrowing hearts of the Survivors, and for the common benefit of the living: which record is to be accomplished, not in a general manner, but, where it can, in *close connection with the bodily remains of the deceased*: and these, it may be added, among the modern Nations of Europe are deposited within, or contiguous to, their places of worship. In ancient times, as is well known, it was the custom to bury the dead beyond the Walls of Towns and Cities; and among the Greeks and Romans they were frequently interred by the way-sides.

I could here pause with pleasure, and invite the Reader to indulge with me in contemplation of the advantages which must have attended such a practice. I could ruminate upon the beauty which the Monuments, thus placed, must have borrowed from the surrounding images of Nature—from the trees, the wild flowers, from a stream running perhaps within sight or hearing, from the beaten road stretching its weary length hard by. Many tender similitudes must these objects have presented to the mind of the Traveller, leaning upon one of the Tombs, or reposing in the coolness of its shade, whether he had halted from weariness or in compliance with the invitation, “Pause, Traveller!” so often found upon the Monuments. And to its Epitaph also must have been supplied strong appeals to visible appearances or immediate impressions, lively and affecting analogies of Life as a Journey—Death as a Sleep overcoming the tired Wayfarer—of Misfortune as a Storm that falls suddenly upon him—of Beauty as a Flower that passeth away, or of innocent pleasure as one that may be gathered—of Virtue that standeth firm as a Rock against the beating Waves;—of Hope “undermined insensibly like the Poplar by the side of the River that has fed it,” or blasted in a moment like a Pine-tree by the stroke of lightening upon the Mountain-top—of admonitions and heart-stirring remembrances, like a refreshing Breeze that comes without warning, or the taste of the waters of an unexpected Fountain. These, and similar suggestions, must have given, formerly, to the language of the senseless stone a voice enforced and endeared by the benignity of that Nature, with which it was in

unison.—We, in modern times, have lost much of these advantages: and they are but in a small degree counterbalanced to the Inhabitants of large Towns and Cities, by the custom of depositing the Dead within, or contiguous to, their places of worship; however splendid or imposing may be the appearance of those Edifices, or however interesting or salutary the recollections associated with them. Even were it not true that Tombs lose their monitory virtue when thus obtruded upon the notice of Men occupied with the cares of the World, and too often sullied and defiled by those cares, yet still, when Death is in our thoughts, nothing can make amends for the want of the soothing influences of Nature, and for the absence of those types of renovation and decay, which the fields and woods offer to the notice of the serious and contemplative mind. To feel the force of this sentiment, let a man only compare in imagination the unsightly manner in which our Monuments are crowded together in the busy, noisy, unclean, and almost grassless Church-yard of a large Town, with the still seclusion of a Turkish Cemetery, in some remote place; and yet further sanctified by the Grove of Cypress in which it is embosomed. Thoughts in the same temper as these have already been expressed with true sensibility by an ingenuous Poet of the present day. The subject of his Poem is “All Saints Church, Derby:” he has been deploring the forbidding and unseemly appearance of its burial-ground, and uttering a wish, that in past times the practice had been adopted of interring the Inhabitants of large Towns in the Country.—

Then in some rural, calm, sequestered spot,
Where healing Nature her benignant look
Ne'er changes, save at that lorn season, when,
With tresses drooping o'er her sable stole,
She yearly mourns the mortal doom of man,
Her noblest work, (so Israel's virgins erst,
With annual moan upon the mountains wept
Their fairest gone,) there in that rural scene,
So placid, so congenial to the wish
The Christian feels, of peaceful rest within
The silent grave, I would have stray'd:

—wandered forth, where the cold dew of heaven
Lay on the humbler graves around, what time
The pale moon gazed upon the turfy mounds,
Pensive, as though like me, in lonely muse,
'Twere brooding on the Dead inhum'd beneath.
There, while with him, the holy Man of Uz,

O'er human destiny I sympathiz'd,
 Counting the long, long periods prophecy
 Decrees to roll, ere the great day arrives
 Of resurrection, oft the blue-eyed Spring
 Had met me with her blossoms, as the Dove
 Of old, return'd with olive leaf, to cheer
 The Patriarch mourning o'er a world destroy'd:
 And I would bless her visit; for to me
 'Tis sweet to trace the consonance that links
 As one, the works of Nature and the word
 Of God.—

JOHN EDWARDS.

A Village Church-yard, lying as it does in the lap of Nature, may indeed be most favourably contrasted with that of a Town of crowded Population; and Sepulture therein combines many of the best tendencies which belong to the mode practised by the Ancients, with others peculiar to itself. The sensations of pious cheerfulness, which attend the celebration of the Sabbath-day in rural places, are profitably chastised by the sight of the Graves of Kindred and Friends, gathered together in that general Home towards which the thoughtful yet happy Spectators themselves are journeying. Hence a Parish Church, in the stillness of the Country, is a visible centre of a community of the living and the dead; a point to which are habitually referred the nearest concerns of both.

As, then, both in Cities and Villages, the Dead are deposited in close connection with our places of worship, with us the composition of an Epitaph naturally turns, still more than among the Nations of Antiquity, upon the most serious and solemn affections of the human mind; upon departed Worth—upon personal or social Sorrow and Admiration—upon Religion individual and social—upon Time, and upon Eternity. Accordingly it suffices, in ordinary cases, to secure a composition of this kind from censure, that it contains nothing that shall shock or be inconsistent with this spirit. But, to Entitle an Epitaph to praise, more than this is necessary. It ought to contain some Thought or Feeling belonging to the mortal or immortal part of our Nature touchingly expressed; and if that be done, however general or even trite the sentiment may be, every man of pure mind will read the words with pleasure and gratitude. A Husband bewails a Wife; a Parent breathes a sign of disappointed hope over a lost Child; a Son utters a sentiment of filial reverence for a departed Father or Mother; a Friend perhaps inscribes an encomium recording the companionable qualities, or the solid virtues, of the Tenant of the Grave, whose departure has left a sadness upon

his memory. This, and a pious admonition to the Living, and a humble expression of Christian confidence in Immortality, is the language of a thousand Church-yards; and it does not often happen that any thing, in a greater degree discriminate or appropriate to the Dead or to the Living, is to be found in them. This want of discrimination has been ascribed by Dr. Johnson, in his Essay upon the Epitaphs of Pope, to two causes; first, the scantiness of the Objects of human praise; and, secondly, the want of variety in the Characters of men; or to use his own words, "to the fact, that the greater part of Mankind have no Character at all." Such language may be holden without blame among the generalities of common conversation; but does not become a Critic and a Moralist speaking seriously upon a serious Subject. The objects of admiration in Human Nature are not scanty but abundant; and every Man has a Character of his own, to the eye that has skill to perceive it. The real cause of the acknowledged want of discrimination in sepulchral memorials is this: That to analyse the Characters of others, especially of those whom we love, is not a common or natural employment of Men at any time. We are not anxious unerringly to understand the constitution of the Minds of those who have soothed, who have cheered, who have supported us: with whom we have been long and daily pleased or delighted. The affections are their own justification. The Light of Love in our Hearts is a satisfactory evidence that there is a body of worth in the minds of our friends or kindred, whence that Light has proceeded. We shrink from the thought of placing their merits and defects to be weighed against each other in the nice balance of pure intellect: nor do we find much temptation to detect the shades by which a good quality or virtue is discriminated in them from an excellence known by the same general name as it exists in the mind of another; and, least of all, do we incline to these refinements when under the pressure of Sorrow, Admiration, or Regret, or when actuated by any of those feelings which incite men to prolong the memory of their Friends and Kindred, by records placed in the bosom of the all-uniting and equalizing Receptacle of the Dead.

The first requisite, then, in an Epitaph is, that it should speak, in a tone which shall sink into the heart, the general language of humanity as connected with the subject of Death—the source from which an Epitaph proceeds; of death and of life. To be born and to die are the two points in which all men feel themselves to be in absolute coincidence. This general language may be uttered so

strikingly as to entitle an Epitaph to high praise; yet it cannot lay claim to the highest unless other excellencies be superadded. Passing through all intermediate steps, we will attempt to determine at once what these excellencies are, and wherein consists the perfection of this species of composition. It will be found to lie in a due proportion of the common or universal feeling of humanity to sensations excited by a distinct and clear conception, conveyed to the Reader's mind, of the Individual, whose death is deplored and whose memory is to be preserved; at least of his character as, after death, it appeared to those who loved him and lament his loss. The general sympathy ought to be quickened, provoked, and diversified, by particular thoughts, actions, images,—circumstances of age, occupation, manner of life, prosperity which the Deceased had known, or adversity to which he had been subject; and these ought to be bound together and solemnized into one harmony by the general sympathy. The two powers should temper, restrain, and exalt each other. The Reader ought to know who and what the Man was whom he is called upon to think of with interest. A distinct conception should be given (implicitly where it can, rather than explicitly) of the Individual lamented. But the Writer of an Epitaph is not an Anatomist who dissects the internal frame of the mind; he is not even a Painter who executes a portrait at leisure and in entire tranquillity: his delineation, we must remember, is performed by the side of the Grave; and, what is more, the grave of one whom he loves and admires. What purity and brightness is that virtue clothed in, the image of which must no longer bless our living eyes! The character of a deceased Friend or beloved Kinsman is not seen, no—nor ought to be seen, otherwise than as a Tree through a tender haze or a luminous mist, that spiritualizes and beautifies it; that takes away indeed, but only to the end that the parts which are not abstracted may appear more dignified and lovely, may impress and affect the more. Shall we say then that this is not truth, not a faithful image; and that accordingly the purposes of commemoration cannot be answered?—It is truth, and of the highest order! for, though doubtless things are not apparent which did exist, yet, the object being looked at through this medium, parts and proportions are brought into distinct view which before had been only imperfectly or unconsciously seen: it is truth hallowed by love—the joint offspring of the worth of the Dead and the affections of the Living!—This may easily be brought to the test. Let one, whose eyes have been

sharpened by personal hostility to discover what was amiss in the character of a good man, hear the tidings of his death, and what a change is wrought in a moment!—Enmity melts away; and, as it disappears, unsightliness, disproportion, and deformity, vanish; and, through the influence of commiseration, a harmony of love and beauty succeeds. Bring such a Man to the Tomb-stone on which shall be inscribed an Epitaph on his Adversary, composed in the spirit which we have recommended. Would he turn from it as from an idle tale? Ah! no—the thoughtful look, the sigh, and perhaps the involuntary tear, would testify that it had a sane, a generous, and good meaning; and that on the Writer's mind had remained an impression which was a true abstract of the character of the deceased; that his gifts and graces were remembered in the simplicity in which they ought to be remembered. The composition and quality of the mind of a virtuous man, contemplated by the side of the Grave where his body is mouldering, ought to appear, and be felt as something midway between what he was on Earth walking about with his living frailties, and what he may be presumed to be as a Spirit in Heaven.

It suffices, therefore, that the Trunk and the main Branches of the Worth of the Deceased be boldly and unaffectedly represented. Any further detail, minutely and scrupulously pursued, especially if this be done with laborious and antithetic discriminations, must inevitably frustrate its own purpose; forcing the passing Spectator to this conclusion,—either that the Dead did not possess the merits ascribed to him, or that they who have raised a monument to his memory, and must therefore be supposed to have been closely connected with him, were incapable of perceiving those merits; or at least during the act of composition had lost sight of them; for, the Understanding having been so busy in its petty occupation, how could the heart of the Mourner be other than cold? and in either of these cases, whether the fault be on the part of the buried Person or the Survivors, the Memorial is unaffecting and profitless.

Much better is it to fall short in discrimination than to pursue it too far, or to labour it unfeelingly. For in no place are we so much disposed to dwell upon these points, of nature and condition, wherein all men resemble each other, as in the Temple where the universal Father is worshipped, or by the side of the Grave which gathers all Human Beings to itself, and “equalizes the lofty and the low.” We suffer and we weep with the same heart; we love and are anxious for one another in one spirit; our hopes look to the same

quarter; and the virtues by which we are all to be furthered and supported, as patience, meekness, good-will, justice, temperance, and temperate desires, are in an equal degree the concern of us all. Let an Epitaph, then, contain at least these acknowledgments to our common nature; nor let the sense of their importance be sacrificed to a balance of opposite qualities or minute distinctions in individual character; which if they do not, (as will for the most part be the case) when examined, resolve themselves into a trick of words, will, even when they are true and just, for the most part be grievously out of place; for, as it is probable that few only have explored these intricacies of human nature, so can the tracing of them be interesting only to a few. But an Epitaph is not a proud Writing shut up for the studious; it is exposed to all, to the wise and the most ignorant; it is condescending, perspicuous, and lovingly solicits regard; its story and admonitions are brief, that the thoughtless, the busy and indolent, may not be deterred, nor the impatient tired; the stooping Old Man cons the engraven record like a second horn-book;—the Child is proud that he can read it—and the Stranger is introduced by its mediation to the company of a Friend: it is concerning all, and for all:—in the Church-yard it is open to the day; the sun looks down upon the stone, and the rains of Heaven beat against it.

Yet, though the Writer who would excite sympathy is bound in this case, more than in any other, to give proof that he himself has been moved, it is to be remembered, that to raise a Monument is a sober and a reflective act; that the inscription which it bears is intended to be permanent and for universal perusal; and that, for this reason, the thoughts and feelings expressed should be permanent also—liberated from that weakness and anguish of sorrow which is in nature transitory, and which with instinctive decency retires from notice. The passions should be subdued, the emotions controlled; strong indeed, but nothing ungovernable or wholly involuntary. Seemliness requires this, and truth requires it also: for how can the Narrator otherwise be trusted? Moreover, a Grave is a tranquillizing object: resignation, in course of time, springs up from it as naturally as the wild flowers, besprinkling the turf with which it may be covered, or gathering round the monument by which it is defended. The very form and substance of the monument which has received the inscription, and the appearance of the letters, testifying with what a slow and laborious hand they must have been engraven, might seem to reproach the Author who

had given way upon this occasion to transports of mind, or to quick turns of conflicting passion; though the same might constitute the life and beauty of a funeral Oration or elegiac Poem.

These sensations and judgments, acted upon perhaps unconsciously, have been one of the main causes why Epitaphs so often personate the Deceased, and represent him as speaking from his own Tomb-stone. The departed Mortal is introduced telling you himself that his pains are gone; that a state of rest is come; and he conjures you to weep for him no longer. He admonishes with the voice of one experienced in the vanity of those affections which are confined to earthly objects, and gives a verdict like a superior Being, performing the office of a Judge, who has no temptations to mislead him, and whose decision cannot but be dispassionate. Thus is Death disarmed of its sting, and affliction unsubstantialized. By this tender fiction the Survivors bind themselves to a sedater sorrow, and employ the intervention of the imagination in order that the reason may speak her own language earlier than she would otherwise have been enabled to do. This shadowy interposition also harmoniously unites the two worlds of the Living and the Dead by their appropriate affections. And I may observe, that here we have an additional proof of the propriety with which sepulchral inscriptions were referred to the consciousness of Immortality as their primal source.

I do not speak with a wish to recommend that an Epitaph should be cast in this mould preferably to the still more common one, in which what is said comes from the Survivors directly; but rather to point out how natural those feelings are which have induced men, in all states and ranks of Society, so frequently to adopt this mode. And this I have done chiefly in order that the laws, which ought to govern the composition of the other, may be better understood. This latter mode, namely, that in which the Survivors speak in their own Persons, seems to me upon the whole greatly preferable: as it admits a wider range of notices; and, above all, because, excluding the fiction which is the ground-work of the other, it rests upon a more solid basis.

Enough has been said to convey our notion of a perfect Epitaph; but it must be observed that one is meant which will best answer the *general* ends of that species of composition. According to the course pointed out, the worth of private life, through all varieties of situation and character, will be most honourably and profitably preserved in memory. Nor would the model recommended less

suit public Men, in all instances save of those persons who by the greatness of their services in the employments of Peace or War, or by the surpassing excellence of their works in Art, Literature, or Science, have made themselves not only universally known, but have filled the heart of their Country with everlasting gratitude. Yet I must here pause to correct myself. In describing the general tenour of thought which Epitaphs ought to hold, I have omitted to say, that, if it be the *actions* of a Man, or even some *one* conspicuous or beneficial act of local or general utility, which have distinguished him and excited a desire that he should be remembered, then, of course, ought the attention to be directed chiefly to those actions or that act; and such sentiments dwelt upon as naturally arise out of them or it. Having made this necessary distinction I proceed.—The mighty Benefactors of mankind, as they are not only known by the immediate Survivors, but will continue to be known familiarly to latest Posterity, do not stand in need of biographic sketches, in such a place; nor of delineations of character to individualize them. This is already done by their Works, in the Memories of Men. Their naked names, and a grand comprehensive sentiment of civic Gratitude, patriotic Love, or human Admiration; or the utterance of some elementary Principle most essential in the constitution of true Virtue; or an intuition, communicated in adequate words, of the sublimity of intellectual Power, these are the only tribute which can here be paid—the only offering that upon such an Altar would not be unworthy!

What needs my Shakespeare for his honoured bones
 The labour of an age in piled stones,
 Or that his hallowed reliques should be hid
 Under a star y-pointing pyramid?
 Dear Son of Memory, great Heir of Fame,
 What need'st thou such weak witness of thy name?
 Thou in our wonder and astonishment
 Hast built thyself a live-long Monument.
 And so sepulchred, in such pomp dost lie,
 That Kings for such a Tomb would wish to die.

TO THE POET, JOHN DYER

SONG FOR THE SPINNING WHEEL

“EVEN AS THE DRAGON’S EYE THAT FEELS THE STRESS”

LAODAMIA

DION

“A LITTLE ONWARD LEND THY GUIDING HAND”

A PARSONAGE IN OXFORDSHIRE

To the Poet, John Dyer was written in 1811 and published in 1820. Wordsworth sent a copy in a letter to Lady Beaumont on November 20th, 1811, in which he said:

If you have not read *The Fleece*, I would strongly recommend it to you. . . . his poem is, in several places, dry and heavy; but its beauties are innumerable, and of a high order. In point of *imagination* and purity of style, I am not sure that he is not superior to any writer in verse since the time of Milton.

Song for the Spinning Wheel, which was dated 1806 in the Fenwick Note and 1812 in the published versions, was first published in 1820.

"*Even as a dragon's eye*" was first published in 1815.

Laodamia was written in 1814 and published in 1815. Of it Wordsworth said: "It cost me more trouble than almost anything of equal length I have ever written."

Dion was written in 1816 and published in 1820. This first version has been used here, retaining the opening stanza describing the swan's grace, which Wordsworth in 1837 "displaced on account of its detaining the reader too long from the subject." The Fenwick Note to *An Evening Walk* describes the swans on Esthwaite he remembered as a boy:

They were of the old magnificent species, bearing in beauty and majesty about the same relation to the Thames swan which that does to the goose. It was from the remembrance of those noble creatures I took, 30 years after, the picture of the swan which I have discarded from the poem of *Dion*.

"*A little onward lend thy guiding hand*" was written in 1816 and published in 1820. The opening quotation from *Samson Agonistes* and the references to *Paradise Lost* and the blinded Oedipus are enlarged upon and made personal in the Fenwick Note:

The complaint in my eyes which gave occasion to this address to my daughter first showed itself as a consequence of inflammation, caught at the top of Kirkstone, when I was over-heated by having carried up the ascent my eldest son, a lusty infant [in January 1805]. Frequently has the disease recurred since, leaving my eyes in a state which has often prevented my reading for months, and makes me at this day incapable of bearing without injury any strong light by day or night. My acquaintance with books has therefore been far short of my wishes.

A Parsonage in Oxfordshire was written on 14 July 1820 and published in 1822. This parsonage, at Souldern, south of Banbury, was the home of his friend of Cambridge days, the Rev. Robert Jones, to whom *Descriptive Sketches* was dedicated. The note in Mrs. Wordsworth's *Continental Journal* for 14 July 1820 runs:

Rose at five o'clock . . . but with disturbed mind (for I had left W. in bed hurting himself with a sonnet. . .). I joined W. in our carriage, and have here written down the sonnet, Jones' Parsonage, so I hope he will be at rest.

To the Poet, John Dyer

BARD of the Fleece, whose skilful Genius made
That Work a living landscape fair and bright;
Nor hallowed less with musical delight
Than those soft scenes through which thy Childhood strayed,
Those southern Tracts of Cambria, "deep embayed,
By green hills fenced, by Ocean's murmur lulled;"
Though hasty Fame hath many a chaplet culled
For worthless brows, while in the pensive shade
Of cold neglect she leaves thy head ungraced,
Yet pure and powerful minds, hearts meek and still,
A grateful few, shall love thy modest Lay
Long as the Shepherd's bleating flock shall stray
O'er naked Snowdon's wide aërial waste;
Long as the thrush shall pipe on Grongar Hill.

Song for the Spinning Wheel

FOUNDED UPON A BELIEF PREVALENT AMONG THE PASTORAL VALES OF
WESTMORLAND

SWIFTLY turn the murmuring wheel!
Night has brought the welcome hour,
When the weary fingers feel
Help, as if from fairy power;
Dewy night o'ershades the ground;
Turn the swift wheel round and round!

Now, beneath the starry sky,
Rest the widely-scatter'd sheep;—
Ply, the pleasant labour, ply!—
For the spindle, while they sleep,
With a motion smooth and fine
Gathers up a trustier line.

Short-liv'd likings may be bred
By a glance from fickle eyes;

SONG FOR THE SPINNING WHEEL

But true love is like the thread
Which the kindly wool supplies,
When the flocks are all at rest,
Sleeping on the mountain's breast.

EVEN as a dragon's eye that feels the stress
Of a bedimmed sleep, or as a lamp
Sullenly glaring through sepulchral damp,
So burns yon Taper mid its black recess
Of mountains, silent, dreary, motionless:
The Lake below reflects it not; the sky
Muffled in clouds affords no company
To mitigate and cheer its loneliness.
Yet round the body of that joyless Thing,
Which sends so far its melancholy light,
Perhaps are seated in domestic ring
A gay society with faces bright,
Conversing, reading, laughing;—or they sing,
While hearts and voices in the song unite.

Laodamia

“**W**ITH sacrifice, before the rising morn
Performed, my slaughtered Lord have I
required;
And in thick darkness, amid shades forlorn,
Him of the infernal Gods have I desired:
Celestial pity I again implore;—
Restore him to my sight—great Jove, restore!”

So speaking, and by fervent love endowed
With faith, the suppliant heav'n-ward lifts her hands;
While, like the Sun emerging from a Cloud,
Her countenance brightens,—and her eye expands,
Her bosom heaves and spreads, her stature grows,
And she expects the issue in repose.

O terror! what hath she perceived?—O joy!
 What doth she look on?—whom doth she behold?
 Her hero slain upon the beach of Troy?
 His vital presence—his corporeal mold?
 It is—if sense deceive her not—'tis He!
 And a God leads him—winged Mercury!

Mild Hermes spake—and touched her with his wand
 That calms all fear, "Such grace hath crowned thy prayer,
 Laodamia, that at Jove's command
 Thy Husband walks the paths of upper air:
 He comes to tarry with thee three hours' space;
 Accept the gift, behold him face to face."

Forth sprang the impassion'd Queen her Lord to clasp;
 Again that consummation she essayed;
 But unsubstantial Form eludes her grasp
 As often as that eager grasp was made.
 The Phantom parts—but parts to re-unite,
 And re-assume his place before her sight.

"Protesilaus, lo! thy guide is gone!
 Confirm, I pray, the Vision with thy voice:
 This is our Palace,—yonder is thy throne;
 Speak, and the floor thou tread'st on will rejoice.
 Not to appal me have the Gods bestowed
 This precious boon,—and blest a sad Abode."

"Great Jove, Laodamia, doth not leave
 His gifts imperfect:—Spectre though I be,
 I am not sent to scare thee or deceive;
 But in reward of thy fidelity.
 And something also did my worth obtain;
 For fearless virtue bringeth boundless gain.

"Thou know'st, the Delphic oracle foretold
 That the first Greek who touch'd the Trojan strand
 Should die; but me the threat did not withhold:
 A generous cause a Victim did demand;
 And forth I leapt upon the sandy plain;
 A self-devoted Chief—by Hector slain."

“Supreme of Heroes—bravest, noblest, best!
Thy matchless courage I bewail no more,
That then, when tens of thousands were deprest
By doubt, propelled thee to the fatal shore;
Thou found’st—and I forgive thee—here thou art—
A nobler counsellor than my poor heart.

“But thou, though capable of sternest deed,
Wert kind as resolute, and good as brave;
And he, whose power restores thee, hath decreed
That thou shouldst cheat the malice of the grave;
Redundant are thy locks, thy lips as fair
As when their breath enriched Thessalian air.

“No Spectre greets me,—no vain Shadow this;
Come, blooming Hero, place thee by my side!
Give, on this well-known couch, one nuptial kiss
To me, this day, a second time thy bride!”
Jove frowned in heaven; the conscious Parcæ threw
Upon those roseate lips a Stygian hue.

“This visage tells thee that my doom is past:
Know, virtue were not virtue if the joys
Of sense were able to return as fast
And surely as they vanish.—Earth destroys
Those raptures duly—Erebus disdains:
Calm pleasures there abide—majestic pains.

“Be taught, O faithful Consort, to control
Rebellious passion: for the Gods approve
The depth, and not the tumult of the soul;
The fervor—not the impotence of love.
Thy transports moderate; and meekly mourn
When I depart, for brief is my sojourn—”

“Ah, wherefore?—Did not Hercules by force
Wrest from the guardian Monster of the tomb
Alcestis, a reanimated Corse,
Given back to dwell on earth in beauty’s bloom?
Medea’s spells dispersed the weight of years,
And Æson stood a Youth mid youthful peers.

“The Gods to us are merciful—and they
Yet further may relent: for mightier far
Than strength of nerve and sinew, or the sway
Of magic potent over sun and star
Is love, though oft to agony distress,
And though his favorite seat be feeble Woman’s breast.

“But if thou go’st, I follow—” “Peace!” he said—
She looked upon him and was calmed and cheered;
The ghastly colour from his lips had fled;
In his deportment, shape, and mien, appeared
Elysian beauty—melancholy grace—
Brought from a pensive though a happy place.

He spake of love, such love as Spirits feel
In worlds whose course is equable and pure;
No fears to beat away—no strife to heal—
The past unsighed for, and the future sure;
Spake, as a witness, of a second birth
For all that is most perfect upon earth:

Of all that is most beauteous—imaged there
In happier beauty; more pellucid streams,
An ampler ether, a diviner air,
And fields invested with purpureal gleams;
Climes which the Sun, who sheds the brightest day
Earth knows, is all unworthy to survey.

Yet there the Soul shall enter which hath earned
That privilege by virtue.—“Ill,” said he,
“The end of man’s existence I discerned,
Who from ignoble games and revelry
Could draw, when we had parted, vain delight
While tears were thy best pastime,—day and night;

“And while my youthful peers, before my eyes,
(Each Hero following his peculiar bent)
Prepared themselves for glorious enterprize
By martial sports,—or, seated in the tent,
Chieftains and kings in council were detained;
What time the Fleet at Aulis lay enchained.

“The wish’d-for wind was given:—I then revolved
Our future course, upon the silent sea;
And, if no worthier led the way, resolved
That, of a thousand vessels, mine should be
The foremost prow in pressing to the strand,—
Mine the first blood that tinged the Trojan sand.

“Yet bitter, oft-times bitter, was the pang
When of thy loss I thought, beloved Wife;
On thee too fondly did my memory hang,
And on the joys we shared in mortal life,—
The paths which we had trod—these fountains—flowers;
My new-planned Cities, and unfinished Towers.

“But should suspense permit the Foe to cry,
‘Behold they tremble!—haughty their array,
Yet of their number no one dares to die?’—
In soul I swept the indignity away:
Old frailties then recurred:—but lofty thought,
In act embodied, my deliverance wrought.

“And thou, though strong in love, art all too weak
In reason, in self-government too slow;
I counsel thee by fortitude to seek
Our blest re-union in the shades below.
The invisible world with thee hath sympathized;
Be thy affections raised and solemnized.

“Learn by a mortal yearning to ascend
Towards a higher object:—Love was given,
Encouraged, sanctioned, chiefly for this end.
For this the passion to excess was driven—
That self might be annulled; her bondage prove
The fetters of a dream, opposed to love.”

Aloud she shrieked! for Hermes re-appears!
Round the dear Shade she would have clung—’tis vain:
The hours are past, too brief had they been years;
And him no mortal effort can detain:
Swift, tow’rd the realms that know not earthly day,
He through the portal takes his silent way—
And on the palace-floor a lifeless corse she lay.

Ah, judge her gently who so deeply loved!
 Her, who, in reason's spite, yet without crime,
 Was in a trance of passion thus removed;
 Delivered from the galling yoke of time
 And these frail elements—to gather flowers
 Of blissful quiet mid unfading bowers.

Yet tears to human suffering are due;
 And mortal hopes defeated and o'erthrown
 Are mourned by man, and not by man alone,
 As fondly he believes.—Upon the side
 Of Hellespont (such faith was entertained)
 A knot of spiry trees for ages grew
 From out the tomb of him for whom she died;
 And ever, when such stature they had gained
 That Ilium's walls were subject to their view,
 The trees' tall summits wither'd at the sight;
 A constant interchange of growth and blight!

Dion

(SEE PLUTARCH)

I

FAIR is the Swan, whose majesty, prevailing
 O'er breezeless water, on Locarno's lake,
 Bears him on while proudly sailing
 He leaves behind a moon-illumined wake:
 Behold! the mantling spirit of reserve
 Fashions his neck into a goodly curve;
 An arch thrown back between luxuriant wings
 Of whitest garniture, like fir-tree boughs
 To which, on some unruff'd morning, clings
 A flaky weight of winter's purest snows!
 —Behold!—as with a gushing impulse heaves
 That downy prow, and softly cleaves
 The mirror of the crystal flood,
 Vanish inverted hill, and shadowy wood,
 And pendant rocks, where'er, in gliding state,
 Winds the mute Creature without visible Mate

DION

Or rival, save the Queen of night
Showering down a silver light,
From heaven, upon her chosen favourite!

II

So pure, so bright, so fitted to embrace,
Where'er he turn'd, a natural grace
Of haughtiness without pretence,
And to unfold a still magnificence,
Was princely Dion, in the power
And beauty of his happier hour.
Nor less the homage that was seen to wait
On Dion's virtues, when the lunar beam
Of Plato's genius, from its lofty sphere,
Fell round him in the grove of Academe,
Softening their inbred dignity austere;—
That he, not too elate
With self-sufficing solitude,
But with majestic lowliness endued,
Might in the universal bosom reign,
And from affectionate observance gain
Help, under every change of adverse fate.

III

Five thousand warriors—O the rapturous day!
Each crown'd with flowers, and arm'd with spear and
shield,
Or ruder weapon which their course might yield,
To Syracuse advance in bright array.
Who leads them on?—The anxious People see
Long-exiled Dion marching at their head,
He also crown'd with flowers of Sicily,
And in a white, far-beaming, corselet clad!
Pure transport undisturbed by doubt or fear
The Gazers feel; and, rushing to the plain,
Salute those Strangers as a holy train
Or blest procession (to the Immortals dear)
That brought their precious liberty again.
Lo! when the gates are enter'd, on each hand,
Down the long street, rich goblets fill'd with wine
In seemly order stand,

On tables set, as if for rites divine;—
 And, wheresoe'er the great Deliverer pass'd,
 Fruits were strewn before his eye
 And flowers upon his person cast
 In boundless prodigality;
 Nor did the general voice abstain from prayer,
 Invoking Dion's tutelary care,
 As if a very Deity he were!

IV

Mourn, hills and groves of Attica! and mourn
 Illyssus, bending o'er thy classic urn!
 Mourn, and lament for him whose spirit dreads
 Your once-sweet memory, studious walks and shades!
 For him who to divinity aspir'd,
 Not on the breath of popular applause,
 But through dependance on the sacred laws
 Framed in the schools where Wisdom dwelt retir'd,
 Intent to trace the ideal path of right
 (More fair than heaven's broad causeway pav'd with stars)
 Which Dion learn'd to measure with delight;
 But he hath overleap'd the eternal bars;
 And, following guides whose craft holds no consent
 With aught that breathes the ethereal element,
 Hath stained the robes of civil power with blood,
 Unjustly shed, though for the public good.
 Whence doubts that came too late, and wishes vain,
 Hollow excuses—and triumphant pain;
 And oft his cogitations sink as low
 As, through the abysses of a joyless heart,
 The heaviest plummet of despair can go—
 But whence that sudden check?—that fearful start!
 He hears an uncouth sound—
 Anon his lifted eyes
 Saw at a long-drawn gallery's dusky bound,
 A Shape, of more than mortal size
 And hideous aspect, stalking round and round!
 A woman's garb the Phantom wore,
 And fiercely swept the marble floor,—
 Like Auster whirling to and fro,
 His force on Caspian foam to try;

Or Boreas when he scours the snow
That skins the plains of Thessaly,
Or when aloft on Mænalus he stops
His flight, mid eddying pine-tree tops!

v

So, but from toil less sign of profit reaping,
The sullen Spectre to her purpose bowed,
Sweeping—vehemently sweeping—
No pause admitted—no design avowed!
“Avaunt, inexplicable Guest!—avaunt
Intrusive Presence!—Let me rather see
The coronal that coiling vipers make;
The torch that flames with many a lurid flake,
And the long train of doleful pageantry
Which they behold, whom vengeful Furies haunt,
Who, while they struggle from the scourge to flee,
Move where the blasted soil is not unworn,
And, in their anguish, bear what other minds have borne!”

vi

But Shapes that come not at an earthly call,
Will not depart when mortal voices bid;
Lords of the visionary Eye whose lid,
Once raised, remains aghast and will not fall!
Ye Gods, thought He, that servile Implement
Obeys a mystical intent!
Your Minister would brush away
The spots that to my soul adhere;
But should she labour night and day,
They will not, cannot disappear.—
Whence angry perturbations,—and that look
Which no Philosophy can brook!

vii

Ill-fated Chief! there are whose hopes are built
Upon the ruins of thy glorious name;
Who, through the portal of one moment's guilt,
Pursue thee with their deadly aim!
O matchless perfidy! portentous lust
Of monstrous crime!—that horror-striking blade,

Drawn in defiance of the Gods, hath laid
 The noble Syracusan low in dust!
 Shudder the walls—the marble city wept—
 And sylvan places heaved a pensive sigh;
 But in calm peace the appointed Victim slept,
 As he had fallen in magnanimity:
 Of spirit too capacious to require
 That Destiny her course should change; too just
 To his own native greatness to desire
 That wretched boon, days lengthened by mistrust.
 So were the hopeless troubles, that involved
 The soul of Dion, instantly dissolv'd.
 Releas'd from life and cares of princely state,
 He left this moral grafted on his Fate,
 "Him only pleasure leads, and peace attends;
 Him, only him, the shield of Jove defends,
 Whose means are fair and spotless as his ends."

"A *LITTLE onward lend thy guiding hand
 To these dark steps, a little further on!*"
 —What trick of memory to *my* voice hath brought
 This mournful iteration? For though Time,
 The Conqueror, crowns the Conquer'd, on this brow
 Planting his favourite silver diadem,
 Nor he, nor minister of his intent
 To run before him, hath enrolled me yet,
 Though not unmenaced, among those who lean
 Upon a living staff, with borrowed sight.
 —O my Antigone, beloved child!
 Should that day come—but hark! the birds salute
 The cheerful dawn, brightening for me the east;
 For me, thy natural Leader, once again
 Impatient to conduct thee, not as erst
 A tottering Infant, with compliant stoop
 From flower to flower supported; but to curb
 Thy nymph-like step swift-bounding o'er the lawn
 Along the loose rocks, or the slippery verge
 Of foaming torrents.—From thy orisons
 Come forth; and, while the morning air is yet

“ A LITTLE ONWARD LEND THY GUIDING HAND ”

Transparent as the soul of innocent youth,
Let me, thy happy Guide, now point thy way,
And now precede thee, winding to and fro,
Till we by perseverance gain the top
Of some smooth ridge, whose brink precipitous
Kindles intense desire for powers withheld
From this corporeal frame; whereon who stands,
Is seized with strong incitement to push forth
His arms, as swimmers use, and plunge—dread thought!
For pastime plunge—into the “ abrupt abyss,”
Where Ravens spread their;plumy vans, at ease!

And yet more gladly thee would I conduct
Through woods and spacious forests,—to behold
There, how the Original of human art,
Heaven-prompted Nature, measures and erects
Her temples, fearless for the stately work,
Though waves in every breeze its high-arched roof,
And storms the pillars rock. But we such schools
Of reverential awe will chiefly seek
In the still summer noon, while beams of light,
Reposing here, and in the aisles beyond
Traceably gliding through the dusk, recall
To mind the living presences of nuns;
A gentle, pensive, white-robed sisterhood,
Whose saintly radiance mitigates the gloom
Of those terrestrial fabrics, where they serve,
To Christ, the Sun of Righteousness, espoused.

Re-open now thy everlasting gates,
Thou Fane of holy writ! Ye classic Domes,
To these glad orbs from darksome bondage freed,
Unfold again your portals! Passage lies
Through you to heights more glorious still, and shades
More awful, where this Darling of my care,
Advancing with me hand in hand, may learn
Without forsaking a too earnest world,
To calm the affections, elevate the soul,
And consecrate her life to truth and love.

A Parsonage in Oxfordshire

WHERE holy ground begins—unhallowed ends,
Is marked by no distinguishable line;
The turf unites—the pathways intertwine;
And, wheresoe'er the stealing footstep tends,
Garden, and that Domain where Kindred, Friends,
And Neighbours rest together, here confound
Their several features—mingled like the sound
Of many waters, or as evening blends
With shady night. Soft airs, from shrub and flower,
Waft fragrant greetings to each silent grave;
Meanwhile between those Poplars as they wave
Their lofty summits, comes and goes a sky
Bright as the glimpses of Eternity,
To Saints accorded in their mortal hour.

POEMS WRITTEN AS MEMORIALS OF TOURS, I

In the opening of the Fenwick Note to *The Excursion* Wordsworth contrasts his own character with Southey's:

Books, as appears from many passages in his writings . . . were in fact *his passion*; and *wandering*, I can with truth affirm, was *mine*; but this propensity in me was happily counteracted by inability from want of fortune to fulfil my wishes.

Memorials of a Tour in Scotland, 1803, did not appear in full until the volume of 1845. All the poems printed here were published in 1807, with the following exceptions: *Departure* was written in 1811 and published in 1827. *At the Grave of Burns* and *Thoughts suggested the day following* were published in 1842, *Address to Kilchurn Castle*, begun in 1803, was published in 1827, and *Fly some kind Harbinger*, though the Fenwick Note says that "this was actually composed the last day of our tour between Dalston and Grasmere," was not published until 1815.

Dorothy Wordsworth's *Recollections of a Tour made in Scotland* is an essential commentary on these poems. With Wordsworth's own note to *Stepping Westward*, printed at the head of the poem, may be compared this extract from the *Recollections*:

We met two neatly dressed women, without hats, who had probably been taking their Sunday evening's walk. One of them said to us in a friendly, soft tone of voice, "What! you are stepping westward?" I cannot describe how affecting this simple expression was in that remote place, with the western sky in front, yet glowing with the departed sun. William wrote the following poem long after [June 1805], in remembrance of his feelings and mine.

Of the four somewhat rhetorical poems written as *Memorials of a Tour in Scotland*, 1814, only *Yarrow Visited* is reprinted here. It was written in 1814 and published in 1815.

To preserve the general chronology of Wordsworth's "topographical" writing in verse and prose, *The Excursion*, Book I, *The River Duddon* and the *Topographical Description of the Country of the Lakes* have been put before the second group of *Poems written as Memorials of Tours* (pp. 749 ff.).

MEMORIALS OF
A TOUR IN SCOTLAND, 1803

Departure

FROM THE VALE OF GRASMERE.
AUGUST 1803

THE gentlest Shade that walked Elysian Plains
Might sometimes covet dissoluble chains;
Even for the Tenants of the Zone that lies
Beyond the stars, celestial Paradise,
Methinks 'twould heighten joy, to overleap
At will the crystal battlements, and peep
Into some other region, though less fair,
To see how things are made and managed there:
Change for the worse might please, incursion bold
Into the tracts of darkness and of cold;
O'er Limbo lake with aëry flight to steer,
And on the verge of Chaos hang in fear.
Such animation often do I find,
Power in my breast, wings growing in my mind,
Then, when some rock or hill is overpast,
Perchance without one look behind me cast,
Some barrier with which Nature, from the birth
Of things, has fenced this fairest spot on earth.
O pleasant transit, Grasmere! to resign
Such happy fields, abodes so calm as thine;
Not like an outcast with himself at strife;
The slave of business, time, or care for life,
But moved by choice; or, if constrained in part,
Yet still with Nature's freedom at the heart;
To cull contentment upon wildest shores,
And luxuries extract from bleakest moors;
With prompt embrace all beauty to enfold,
And having rights in all that we behold.
—Then why these lingering steps? A bright adieu,
For a brief absence, proves that love is true;
Ne'er can the way be irksome or forlorn,
That winds into itself, for sweet return.

At the Grave of Burns

1803

I SHIVER, Spirit fierce and bold,
At thought of what I now behold:
As vapours breathed from dungeons cold
Strike pleasure dead,
So sadness comes from out the mould
Where Burns is laid.

And have I then thy bones so near,
And thou forbidden to appear?
As if it were thyself that's here,
I shrink with pain;
And both my wishes and my fear
Alike are vain.

Off weight—nor press on weight!—away
Dark thoughts!—they came, but not to stay;
With chastened feelings would I pay
The tribute due
To him, and aught that hides his clay
From mortal view.

Fresh as the flower, whose modest worth
He sang, his genius “glinted” forth,
Rose like a star that touching earth,
For so it seems,
Doth glorify its humble birth
With matchless beams.

The piercing eye, the thoughtful brow,
The struggling heart, where be they now?—
Full soon the Aspirant of the plough,
The prompt, the brave,
Slept, with the obscurest, in the low
And silent grave.

Well might I mourn that He was gone
Whose light I hailed when first it shone,

AT THE GRAVE OF BURNS

When, breaking forth as nature's own,
It showed my youth
How Verse may build a princely throne
On humble truth.

Alas! where'er the current tends,
Regret pursues and with it blends,—
Huge Criffel's hoary top ascends
By Skiddaw seen,—
Neighbours we were, and loving friends
We might have been;

True friends though diversely inclined;
But heart with heart and mind with mind,
Where the main fibres are entwined,
Through Nature's skill,
May even by contraries be joined
More closely still.

The tear will start, and let it flow;
Thou "poor Inhabitant below,"
At this dread moment—even so—
Might we together
Have sate and talked where gowans blow,
Or on wild heather.

What treasures would have then been placed
Within my reach; of knowledge graced
By fancy what a rich repast!
But why go on?—
Oh! spare to sweep, thou mournful blast,
His grave grass-grown.

There, too, a Son, his joy and pride,
(Not three weeks past the Stripling died,)
Lies gathered to his Father's side,
Soul-moving sight!
Yet one to which is not denied
Some sad delight.

For *he* is safe, a quiet bed
Hath early found among the dead,
Harboured where none can be misled,
 Wronged, or distrest;
And surely here it may be said
 That such are blest.

And oh for Thee, by pitying grace
Checked oft-times in a devious race,
May He, who halloweth the place
 Where Man is laid
Receive thy Spirit in the embrace
 For which it prayed!

Sighing I turned away; but ere
Night fell I heard, or seemed to hear,
Music that sorrow comes not near,
 A ritual hymn,
Chanted in love that casts out fear
 By Seraphim.

Thoughts

SUGGESTED THE DAY FOLLOWING
ON THE BANKS OF NITH,
NEAR THE POET'S RESIDENCE

Too frail to keep the lofty vow
That must have followed when his brow
Was wreathed—"The Vision" tells us how—
 With holly spray,
He faltered, drifted to and fro,
 And passed away.

Well might such thoughts, dear Sister, throng
Our minds when, lingering all too long,
Over the grave of Burns we hung
 In social grief—
Indulged as if it were a wrong
 To seek relief.

But, leaving each unquiet theme
Where gentlest judgments may misdeem,
And prompt to welcome every gleam
Of good and fair,
Let us beside this limpid Stream
Breathe hopeful air.

Enough of sorrow, wreck, and blight;
Think rather of those moments bright
When to the consciousness of right
His course was true,
When Wisdom prospered in his sight
And virtue grew.

Yes, freely let our hearts expand,
Freely as in youth's season bland,
When side by side, his Book in hand,
We wont to stray,
Our pleasure varying at command
Of each sweet Lay.

How oft inspired must he have trod
These pathways, yon far-stretching road!
There lurks his home; in that Abode,
With mirth elate,
Or in his nobly-pensive mood,
The Rustic sate.

Proud thoughts that Image overawes,
Before it humbly let us pause,
And ask of Nature, from what cause
And by what rules
She trained her Burns to win applause
That shames the Schools.

Through busiest street and loneliest glen
Are felt the flashes of his pen;
He rules mid winter snows, and when
Bees fill their hives;
Deep in the general heart of men
His power survives.

A TOUR IN SCOTLAND, 1803

What need of fields in some far clime
Where Heroes, Sages, Bards sublime,
And all that fetched the flowing rhyme
From genuine springs,
Shall dwell together till old Time
Folds up his wings?

Sweet Mercy! to the gates of Heaven
This Minstrel lead, his sins forgiven;
The rueful conflict, the heart riven
With vain endeavour,
And memory of Earth's bitter leaven,
Effaced for ever.

But why to Him confine the prayer,
When kindred thoughts and yearnings bear
On the frail heart the purest share
With all that live?—
The best of what we do and are,
Just God, forgive!

To a Highland Girl

(AT INVERSNEYDE, UPON LOCH LOMOND.)

SWEET Highland Girl, a very shower
Of beauty is thy earthly dower!
Twice seven consenting years have shed
Their utmost bounty on thy head:
And these gray Rocks; this household Lawn;
These Trees, a veil just half withdrawn;
This fall of water, that doth make
A murmur near the silent Lake;
This little Bay; a quiet Road
That holds in shelter thy Abode;
In truth together ye do seem
Like something fashion'd in a dream;
Such Forms as from their covert peep
When earthly cares are laid asleep!

TO A HIGHLAND GIRL

Yet, dream and vision as thou art,
I bless thee with a human heart:
God shield thee to thy latest years!
I neither know thee nor thy peers;
And yet my eyes are fill'd with tears.

With earnest feeling I shall pray
For thee when I am far away:
For never saw I mien, or face,
In which more plainly I could trace
Benignity and home-bred sense
Ripening in perfect innocence.
Here, scatter'd like a random seed,
Remote from men, Thou dost not need
The embarrass'd look of shy distress,
And maidenly shamefacedness:
Thou wear'st upon thy forehead clear
The freedom of a Mountaineer.
A face with gladness overspread!
Sweet looks, by human kindness bred!
And seemliness complete, that sways
Thy courtesies, about thee plays;
With no restraint, but such as springs
From quick and eager visitings
Of thoughts, that lie beyond the reach
Of thy few words of English speech:
A bondage sweetly brook'd, a strife
That gives thy gestures grace and life!
So have I, not unmov'd in mind,
Seen birds of tempest-loving kind,
Thus beating up against the wind.

What hand but would a garland cull
For thee who art so beautiful?
O happy pleasure! here to dwell
Beside thee in some heathy dell;
Adopt your homely ways and dress,
A Shepherd, thou a Shepherdess!
But I could frame a wish for thee
More like a grave reality:
Thou art to me but as a wave

Of the wild sea; and I would have
Some claim upon thee, if I could,
Though but of common neighbourhood.
What joy to hear thee, and to see!
Thy elder Brother I would be,
Thy Father, any thing to thee!

Now thanks to Heaven! that of its grace
Hath led me to this lonely place.
Joy have I had; and going hence
I bear away my recompence.
In spots like these it is we prize
Our Memory, feel that she hath eyes:
Then, why should I be loth to stir?
I feel this place was made for her;
To give new pleasure like the past,
Continued long as life shall last.
Nor am I loth, though pleased at heart,
Sweet Highland Girl! from Thee to part;
For I, methinks, till I grow old,
As fair before me shall behold,
As I do now, the Cabin small,
The Lake, the Bay, the Waterfall;
And Thee, the Spirit of them all!

Glen-Almain

OR THE NARROW GLEN

IN this still place, remote from men,
Sleeps Ossian, in the NARROW GLEN;
In this still place, where murmurs on
But one meek Streamlet, only one:
He sang of battles, and the breath
Of stormy war, and violent death;
And should, methinks, when all was past,
Have rightfully been laid at last
Where rocks were rudely heap'd, and rent
As by a spirit turbulent;
Where sights were rough, and sounds were wild,

And every thing unreconciled;
In some complaining, dim retreat,
For fear and melancholy meet;
But this is calm; there cannot be
A more entire tranquillity.

Does then the Bard sleep here indeed?
Or is it but a groundless creed?
What matters it? I blame them not
Whose Fancy in this lonely Spot
Was moved; and in this way express'd
Their notion of it's perfect rest.
A Convent, even a hermit's Cell
Would break the silence of this Dell:
It is not quiet, is not ease;
But something deeper far than these:
The separation that is here
Is of the grave; and of austere
And happy feelings of the dead:
And, therefore, was it rightly said
That Ossian, last of all his race!
Lies buried in this lonely place.

Stepping Westward

While my Fellow-traveller and I were walking by the side of Loch Ketterine, one fine evening after sun-set, in our road to a Hut where in the course of our Tour we had been hospitably entertained some weeks before, we met, in one of the loneliest parts of that solitary region, two well-dressed Women, one of whom said to us, by way of greeting, "What you are stepping westward?"

"*WHAT, you are stepping westward?*"—"Yea."
—"Twould be a *wildish* destiny,
If we, who thus together roam
In a strange Land, and far from home,
Were in this place the guests of Chance:
Yet who would stop, or fear to advance,
Though home or shelter he had none,
With such a Sky to lead him on?"

The dewy ground was dark and cold;
Behind, all gloomy to behold;
And stepping westward seem'd to be
A kind of *heavenly* destiny;
I liked the greeting; 'twas a sound
Of something without place or bound;
And seem'd to give me spiritual right
To travel through that region bright.

The voice was soft, and she who spake
Was walking by her native Lake:
The salutation had to me
The very sound of courtesy:
Its power was felt; and while my eye
Was fixed upon the glowing sky,
The echo of the voice enwrought
A human sweetness with the thought
Of travelling through the world that lay
Before me in my endless way.

The Solitary Reaper

["It was harvest time, and the fields were quietly—might I be allowed to say pensively?—enlivened by small companies of reapers. It is not uncommon in the more lonely parts of the Highlands to see a single person so employed. The following poem was suggested to William by a beautiful sentence in Thomas Wilkinson's *Tour in Scotland*." Dorothy Wordsworth's *Recollections of a Tour made in Scotland*.]

BEHOLD her, single in the field,
Yon solitary Highland Lass!
Reaping and singing by herself;
Stop here, or gently pass!
Alone she cuts, and binds the grain,
And sings a melancholy strain;
O listen! for the Vale profound
Is overflowing with the sound.

No Nightingale did ever chaunt
So sweetly to reposing bands
Of Travellers; in some shady haunt,
Among Arabian Sands:

THE SOLITARY REAPER

No sweeter voice was ever heard
In spring-time from the Cuckoo-bird,
Breaking the silence of the seas
Among the farthest Hebrides.

Will no one tell me what she sings?
Perhaps the plaintive numbers flow
For old, unhappy, far-off things,
And battles long ago:
Or is it some more humble lay,
Familiar matter of today?
Some natural sorrow, loss, or pain,
That has been, and may be again!

Whate'er the theme, the Maiden sung
As if her song could have no ending;
I saw her singing at her work,
And o'er the sickle bending;
I listen'd till I had my fill:
And, as I mounted up the hill,
The music in my heart I bore,
Long after it was heard no more.

Address to Kilchurn Castle Upon Loch Awe

"From the top of the hill a most impressive scene opened upon our view, —a ruined Castle on an Island at some distance from the shore, backed by a Cove of the Mountain Cruachan, down which came a foaming stream. The Castle occupied every foot of the Island that was visible to us, appearing to rise out of the Water,—mists rested upon the mountain side, with spots of sunshine; there was a mild desolation in the low-grounds, a solemn grandeur in the mountains, and the Castle was wild, yet stately—not dismantled of Turrets—nor the walls broken down, though obviously a ruin." *Extract from the Journal of my Companion.*

CHILD of loud-throated War! the mountain Stream
Roars in thy hearing; but thy hour of rest
Is come, and thou art silent in thy age;
Save when the winds sweep by and sounds are caught
Ambiguous, neither wholly thine nor theirs.

Oh! there is life that breathes not; Powers there are
That touch each other to the quick in modes
Which the gross world no sense hath to perceive,
No soul to dream of. What art Thou, from care
Cast off—abandoned by thy rugged Sire,
Nor by soft Peace adopted; though, in place
And in dimension, such that thou might'st seem
But a mere footstool to yon sovereign Lord,
Huge Cruachan, (a thing that meaner Hills
Might crush, nor know that it had suffered harm;)
Yet he, not loth, in favour of thy claims
To reverence suspends his own; submitting
All that the God of Nature hath conferred,
All that he has in common with the Stars,
To the memorial majesty of Time
Impersonated in thy calm decay!

Take, then, they seat, Vicegerent unproved!
Now, while a farewell gleam of evening light
Is fondly lingering on thy shattered front,
Do thou, in turn, be paramount; and rule
Over the pomp and beauty of a scene
Whose mountains, torrents, lake, and woods, unite
To pay thee homage; and with these are joined,
In willing admiration and respect,
Two Hearts, which in thy presence might be called
Youthful as Spring. Shade of departed Power,
Skeleton of unfleshed humanity,
The Chronicle were welcome that should call
Into the compass of distinct regard
The toils and struggles of thy infancy!
Yon foaming flood seems motionless as Ice;
Its dizzy turbulence eludes the eye,
Frozen by distance; so, majestic Pile,
To the perception of this Age, appear
Thy fierce beginnings, softened and subdued
And quieted in character; the strife,
The pride, the fury uncontrollable,
Lost on the aërial heights of the Crusades!¹

¹ The Tradition is, that the Castle was built by a Lady during the absence of her Lord in Palestine.

Rob Roy's Grave

The History of Rob Roy is sufficiently known; his Grave is near the head of Loch Ketterine, in one of those small Pin-fold-like Burial-grounds, of neglected and desolate appearance, which the Traveller meets with in the Highlands of Scotland.

A FAMOUS Man is Robin Hood,
The English Ballad-singer's joy!
And Scotland has a Thief as good,
An Outlaw of as daring mood,
She has her brave Rob Roy!
Then clear the weeds from off his Grave,
And let us chaunt a passing Stave
In honour of that Hero brave!

Heaven gave Rob Roy a dauntless heart,
And wondrous length and strength of arm:
Nor craved he more to quell his Foes,
Or keep his Friends from harm.

Yet was Rob Roy as *wise* as brave;
Forgive me if the phrase be strong;—
A Poet worthy of Rob Roy
Must scorn a timid song.

Say, then, that he was wise as brave;
As wise in thought as bold in deed:
For in the principles of things
He sought his moral creed.

Said generous Rob, "What need of Books?
Burn all the Statutes and their shelves:
They stir us up against our Kind;
And worse, against Ourselves.

"We have a passion, make a law,
Too false to guide us or controul!
And for the law itself we fight
In bitterness of soul.

“And, puzzled, blinded thus, we lose
Distinctions that are plain and few:
These find I graven on my heart:
That tells me what to do.

“The Creatures see of flood and field,
And those that travel on the wind!
With them no strife can last; they live
In peace, and peace of mind.

“For why?—because the good old Rule
Sufficeth them, the simple Plan,
That they should take who have the power,
And they should keep who can.

“A lesson which is quickly learn’d,
A signal this which all can see!
Thus nothing here provokes the Strong
To wanton cruelty.

“All freakishness of mind is check’d;
He tam’d, who foolishly aspires;
While to the measure of his might
Each fashions his desires.

“All Kinds, and Creatures, stand and fall
By strength of prowess or of wit:
’Tis God’s appointment who must sway,
And who is to submit.

“Since then”, said Robin, “right is plain,
And longest life is but a day;
To have my ends, maintain my rights,
I’ll take the shortest way.”

And thus among these rocks he liv’d,
Through summer’s heat and winter’s snow:
The Eagle, he was Lord above,
And Rob was Lord below.

ROB ROY'S GRAVE

So was it—*would*, at least, have been
But through untowardness of fate:
For Polity was then too strong;
 He came an age too late,

Or shall we say an age too soon?
For, were the bold Man living *now*,
How might he flourish in his pride,
 With buds on every bough!

Then rents and Factors, rights of chace,
Sheriffs, and Lairds and their domains,
Would all have seem'd but paltry things,
 Not worth a moment's pains.

Rob Roy had never linger'd here,
To these few meagre Vales confin'd;
But thought how wide the world, the times
 How fairly to his mind!

And to his Sword he would have said,
“Do Thou my sovereign will enact
From land to land through half the earth!
 Judge thou of law and fact!

“Tis fit that we should do our part;
Becoming, that mankind should learn
That we are not to be surpass'd
 In fatherly concern.

“Of old things all are over old,
Of good things none are good enough:—
We'll show that we can help to frame
 A world of other stuff.

“I, too, will have my Kings that take
From me the sign of life and death:
Kingdoms shall shift about, like clouds,
 Obedient to my breath.”

A TOUR IN SCOTLAND, 1803

And, if the word had been fulfill'd,
As *might* have been, then, thought of joy!
France would have had her present Boast;
And we our own Rob Roy!

Oh! say not so; compare them not;
I would not wrong thee, Champion brave!
Would wrong thee no where; least of all
Here standing by thy Grave.

For Thou, although with some wild thoughts,
Wild Chieftain of a Savage Clan!
Hadst this to boast of; thou didst love
The *liberty* of Man.

And, had it been thy lot to live
With us who now behold the light,
Thou would'st have nobly stirr'd thyself,
And battled for the Right.

For Robin was the poor Man's stay,
The poor man's heart, the poor man's hand;
And all the oppress'd, who wanted strength,
Had Robin's to command.

Bear witness many a pensive sigh
Of thoughtful Herdsman when he strays
Alone upon Loch Veol's Heights,
And by Loch Lomond's Braes!

And, far and near, through vale and hill,
Are faces that attest the same;
And kindle, like a fire new stirr'd,
At sound of Rob Roy's name.

Sonnet

(COMPOSED AT ——— CASTLE)

["The Castle here mentioned was Nidpath near Pebbles. The person alluded to was the then Duke of Queensberry. The fact was told me by Walter Scott." Fenwick Note.]

DEGENERATE Douglas! oh, the unworthy Lord!
 Whom mere despite of heart could so far please,
 And love of havoc (for with such disease
 Fame taxes him) that he could send forth word
 To level with the dust a noble horde,
 A brotherhood of venerable Trees,
 Leaving an ancient Dome, and Towers like these,
 Beggared and outraged!—Many hearts deplor'd
 The fate of those old Trees; and oft with pain
 The Traveller, at this day, will stop and gaze
 On wrongs, which Nature scarcely seems to heed:
 For shelter'd places, bosoms, nooks and bays,
 And the pure mountains, and the gentle Tweed,
 And the green silent pastures, yet remain.

Yarrow Unvisited

(See the various Poems the scene of which is laid upon the Banks of the Yarrow; in particular, the exquisite Ballad of Hamilton, beginning

"Busk ye, busk ye my bonny, bonny Bride,
 Busk ye, busk ye my winsome Marrow!"—)

FROM Stirling castle we had seen
 The mazy Forth unravell'd;
 Had trod the banks of Clyde, and Tay,
 And with the Tweed had travell'd;
 And, when we came to Clovenford,
 Then said my "*winsome Marrow*,"
 "Whate'er betide, we'll turn aside,
 And see the Braes of Yarrow."

"Let Yarrow folk, *frae* Selkirk Town,
 Who have been buying, selling,
 Go back to Yarrow, 'tis their own,
 Each Maiden to her Dwelling!

On Yarrow's Banks let herons feed,
Hares couch, and rabbits burrow!
But we will downward with the Tweed,
Nor turn aside to Yarrow.

"There's Galla Water, Leader Haughs,
Both lying right before us;
And Dryborough, where with chiming Tweed
The Lintwhites sing in chorus;
There's pleasant Tiviot Dale, a land
Made blithe with plough and harrow;
Why throw away a needful day
To go in search of Yarrow?"

"What's Yarrow but a River bare
That glides the dark hills under?
There are a thousand such elsewhere
As worthy of your wonder."
—Strange words they seem'd of slight and scorn;
My True-love sighed for sorrow;
And look'd me in the face, to think
I thus could speak of Yarrow!

"Oh! green," said I, "are Yarrow's Holms,
And sweet is Yarrow flowing!
Fair hangs the apple frae the rock,¹
But we will leave it growing.
O'er hilly path, and open Strath,
We'll wander Scotland thorough;
But, though so near, we will not turn
Into the Dale of Yarrow.

"Let Beeves and home-bred Kine partake
The sweets of Burn-mill meadow;
The Swan on still St. Mary's Lake
Float double, Swan and Shadow!
We will not see them; will not go,
Today, nor yet to-morrow;
Enough if in our hearts we know,
There's such a place as Yarrow.

¹ See Hamilton's Ballad as above.

“Be Yarrow Stream unseen, unknown!
It must, or we shall rue it:
We have a vision of our own;
Ah! why should we undo it?
The treasured dreams of times long past
We’ll keep them, winsome Marrow!
For when we’re there although ’tis fair
’Twill be another Yarrow!

“If Care with freezing years should come,
And wandering seem but folly,
Should we be loth to stir from home,
And yet be melancholy;
Should life be dull, and spirits low,
’Twill soothe us in our sorrow
That earth hath something yet to show,
The bonny Holms of Yarrow!”

October, 1803

[IN THE PASS OF KILLICRANKY
AN INVASION BEING EXPECTED]

SIX thousand Veterans practis’d in War’s game,
Tried men, at Killicranky were array’d
Against an equal Host that wore the Plaid,
Shepherds and Herdsmen.—Like a whirlwind came
The Highlanders, the slaughter spread like flame;
And Garry thundering down his mountain-road
Was stopp’d, and could not breathe beneath the load
Of the dead bodies. ’Twas a day of shame
For them whom precept and the pedantry
Of cold mechanic battle do enslave.
Oh! for a single hour of that Dundee
Who on that day the word of onset gave!
Like conquest would the Men of England see;
And her Foes find a like inglorious Grave.

The Matron of Jedborough and her Husband

At Jedborough, we went into private Lodgings for a few days; and the following Verses were called forth by the character, and domestic situation, of our Hostess.

AGE! twine thy brows with fresh spring flowers!
 And call a train of laughing Hours;
 And bid them dance, and bid them sing;
 And Thou, too, mingle in the Ring!
 Take to thy heart a new delight;
 If not, make merry in despite!
 For there is one who scorns thy power.
 —But dance! for under Jedborough Tower
 There liveth in the prime of glee,
 A Woman, whose years are seventy-three,
 And She will dance and sing with thee!

Nay! start not at that Figure—there!
 Him who is rooted to his chair!
 Look at him—look again! for He
 Hath long been of thy Family.
 With legs that move not, if they can,
 And useless arms, a Trunk of Man,
 He sits, and with a vacant eye;
 A Sight to make a Stranger sigh!
 Deaf, drooping, that is now his doom:
 His world is in this single room:
 Is this a place for mirthful cheer?
 Can merry-making enter here?

The joyous Woman is the Mate
 Of Him in that forlorn estate!
 He breathes a subterraneous damp,
 But bright as Vesper shines her lamp:
 He is as mute as Jedborough Tower;
 She jocund as it was of yore,
 With all its bravery on; in times,
 When, all alive with merry chimes,
 Upon a sun-bright morn of May,
 It rous'd the Vale to Holiday.

I praise thee, Matron! and thy due
 Is praise; heroic praise, and true!
 With admiration I behold
 Thy gladness unsubdued and bold:
 Thy looks, thy gestures, all present
 The picture of a life well-spent:
 This do I see; and something more;
 A strength unthought of heretofore!
 Delighted am I for thy sake;
 And yet a higher joy partake.
 Our Human-nature throws away
 Its second Twilight, and looks gay:
 A Land of promise and of pride
 Unfolding, wide as life is wide.

Ah! see her helpless Charge! enclos'd
 Within himself, as seems; composed;
 To fear of loss, and hope of gain,
 The strife of happiness and pain,
 Utterly dead! yet, in the guise
 Of little Infants, when their eyes
 Begin to follow to and fro
 The persons that before them go,
 He tracks her motions, quick or slow.
 Her buoyant Spirit can prevail
 Where common cheerfulness would fail;
 She strikes upon him with the heat
 Of July Suns; he feels it sweet;
 An animal delight though dim!
 'Tis all that now remains for him!

I look'd, I scann'd her o'er and o'er;
 The more I look'd I wondered more:
 When suddenly I seem'd to espy
 A trouble in her strong black eye;
 A remnant of uneasy light,
 A flash of something over-bright!
 And soon she made this matter plain;
 And told me, in a thoughtful strain,
 That she had borne a heavy yoke,
 Been stricken by a twofold stroke;

Ill health of body; and had pin'd
Beneath worse ailments of the mind.

So be it! but let praise ascend
To Him who is our Lord and Friend!
Who from disease and suffering
Hath call'd for thee a second Spring;
Repaid thee for that sore distress
By no untimely joyousness;
Which makes of thine a blissful state;
And cheers thy melancholy Mate!

On Approaching Home

AFTER A TOUR IN SCOTLAND,
1803

FLY, some kind Spirit, fly to Grasmere Vale!
Say that we come, and come by this day's light;
Glad tidings!—spread them over field and height;
But chiefly let one Cottage hear the tale;
There let a mystery of joy prevail,
The Kitten frolic, with unruly might,
And Rover whine, as at a second sight
Of near-approaching good that shall not fail;—
And from that Infant's face let joy appear;
Yea, let our Mary's one Companion Child,
That hath her six weeks' solitude beguiled
With intimations manifold and dear,
While we have wandered over wood and wild,
Smile on his Mother now with bolder cheer.

MEMORIALS OF
A TOUR IN SCOTLAND, 1814

Yarrow Visited

September, 1814

AND is this—Yarrow?—*This* the Stream
Of which my fancy cherish'd,
So faithfully, a waking dream?
An image that hath perish'd!
O that some Minstrel's harp were near,
To utter notes of gladness,
And chase this silence from the air,
That fills my heart with sadness!

Yet why?—a silvery current flows
With uncontrolled meanderings;
Nor have these eyes by greener hills
Been soothed, in all my wanderings.
And, through her depths, Saint Mary's Lake
Is visibly delighted;
For not a feature of those hills
Is in the mirror slighted.

A blue sky bends o'er Yarrow vale,
Save where that pearly whiteness
Is round the rising sun diffused,
A tender, hazy brightness;
Mild dawn of promise! that excludes
All profitless dejection;
Though not unwilling here to admit
A pensive recollection.

Where was it that the famous Flower
Of Yarrow Vale lay bleeding?
His bed perchance was yon smooth mound
On which the herd is feeding:

And haply from this crystal pool,
Now peaceful as the morning,
The Water-wraith ascended thrice—
And gave his doleful warning.

Delicious is the Lay that sings
The haunts of happy Lovers,
The path that leads them to the grove,
The leafy grove that covers:
And Pity sanctifies the verse
That paints, by strength of sorrow,
The unconquerable strength of love;
Bear witness, rueful Yarrow!

But thou, that didst appear so fair
To fond imagination,
Dost rival in the light of day
Her delicate creation:
Meek loveliness is round thee spread,
A softness still and holy;
The grace of forest charms decayed,
And pastoral melancholy.

That Region left, the Vale unfolds
Rich groves of lofty stature,
With Yarrow winding through the pomp
Of cultivated nature;
And, rising from those lofty groves,
Behold a Ruin hoary!
The shattered front of Newark's Towers,
Renowned in Border story.

Fair scenes for childhood's opening bloom,
For sportive youth to stray in;
For manhood to enjoy his strength;
And age to wear away in!
Yon Cottage seems a bower of bliss;
It promises protection
To studious ease, and generous cares,
And every chaste affection!

YARROW VISITED

How sweet, on this autumnal day,
The wild wood's fruits to gather,
And on my True-love's forehead plant
A crest of blooming heather!
And what if I enwreathed my own!
'Twere no offence to reason;
The sober Hills thus deck their brows
To meet the wintry season.

I see—but not by sight alone,
Lov'd Yarrow, have I won thee;
A ray of Fancy still survives—
Her sunshine plays upon thee!
Thy ever-youthful waters keep
A course of lively pleasure;
And gladsome notes my lips can breathe,
Accordant to the measure.

The vapours linger round the Heights,
They melt—and soon must vanish;
One hour is theirs, nor more is mine—
Sad thought, which I would banish,
But that I know, where'er I go,
Thy genuine image, Yarrow,
Will dwell with me—to heighten joy,
And cheer my mind in sorrow.

THE EXCURSION

The complex story of the composition of *The Excursion* and its relation to *The Prelude* and *The Recluse* is set out in admirable detail in de Selincourt's edition of *The Poetical Works* (v. 363-72). It was begun in 1797, completed and revised in 1814 and published in that year as *The Excursion, Being a Portion of The Recluse, A Poem*.

The Fenwick Note describes the character of the Wanderer in this first book:

Had I been born in a class which would have deprived me of what is called a liberal education, it is not unlikely that, being strong in body, I should have taken to a way of life such as that in which my Pedlar passed the greater part of his days. At all events, I am here called upon freely to acknowledge that the character I have represented in his person is chiefly an idea of what I fancied my own character might have become in his circumstances. Nevertheless, much of what he says and does had an external existence that fell under my own youthful and subsequent observation. An individual named Patrick, by birth and education a Scotchman, followed this humble occupation for many years, and afterwards settled in the Town of Kendal. He married a kinswoman of my wife's, and her sister Sarah was brought up from early childhood under this good man's eye. My own imaginations I was happy to find clothed in reality, and fresh ones suggested, by what she reported of this man's tenderness of heart, his strong and pure imagination, and his solid attainments in literature, chiefly religious whether in prose or verse.

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THE EXCURSION

TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE
WILLIAM, EARL OF LONSDALE, K.G.
ETC., ETC.

OF T, through thy fair domains, illustrious Peer!
In youth I roamed, on youthful pleasures bent;
And mused in rocky cell or sylvan tent,
Beside swift-flowing Lowther's current clear.
—Now, by thy care befriended, I appear
Before thee, LONSDALE, and this Work present,
A token (may it prove a monument!)
Of high respect and gratitude sincere.
Gladly would I have waited till my task
Had reached its close; but Life is insecure,
And Hope full oft fallacious as a dream:
Therefore, for what is here produced I ask
Thy favour; trusting that thou wilt not deem
The Offering, though imperfect, premature.

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH.

Rydal Mount, Westmoreland,
July 29, 1814.

Preface

THE Title-page announces that this is only a Portion of a Poem; and the Reader must be here apprized that it belongs to the second part of a long and laborious Work, which is to consist of three parts.—The Author will candidly acknowledge that, if the first of these had been completed, and in such a manner as to satisfy his own mind, he should have preferred the natural order of publication, and have given that to the World first; but, as the second division of the Work was designed to refer more to passing events, and to an existing state of things, than the others were meant to do, more continuous exertion was naturally bestowed upon it, and greater progress made here than in the rest of the Poem; and as this part does not depend upon the preceding, to a degree which will materially injure its own peculiar interest, the Author, complying with the earnest entreaties of some valued Friends, presents the following Pages to the Public.

It may be proper to state whence the Poem, of which *The Excursion* is a part, derives its Title of *THE RECLUSE*.—Several years ago, when the Author retired to his native Mountains, with the hope of being enabled to construct a literary Work that might live, it was a reasonable thing that he should take a review of his own Mind, and examine how far Nature and Education had qualified him for such employment. As subsidiary to this preparation, he undertook to record, in Verse, the origin and progress of his own powers, as far as he was acquainted with them. That Work, addressed to a dear Friend, most distinguished for his knowledge and genius, and to whom the Author's Intellect is deeply indebted, has been long finished; and the result of the investigation which gave rise to it was a determination to compose a philosophical Poem, containing views of Man, Nature, and Society; and to be entitled *The Recluse*; as having for its principal subject the sensations and opinions of a Poet living in retirement.—The preparatory Poem is biographical, and conducts the history of the Author's mind to the point when he was emboldened to hope that his faculties were sufficiently matured for entering upon the arduous labour which he had proposed to himself; and the two Works have the same kind of relation to each other, if he may so express himself, as the Ante-chapel has to the body of a gothic Church. Continuing this allusion, he may be permitted to add, that his minor Pieces, which have been long before the Public, when they shall be properly arranged, will be found by the attentive Reader to have such connection with the main Work as may give them claim to be likened to the little Cells, Oratories, and sepulchral Recesses, ordinarily included in those Edifices.

The Author would not have deemed himself justified in saying, upon this occasion, so much of performances either unfinished, or unpublished, if he had not thought that the labour bestowed by him upon what he has heretofore and now laid before the Public, entitled him to candid attention for such a statement as he thinks necessary to throw light upon his endeavours to please, and he would hope, to benefit his countrymen.—Nothing further need be added, than that the first and third parts of the *Recluse* will consist chiefly of meditations in the Author's own Person; and that in the intermediate part (*The Excursion*) the intervention of Characters speaking is employed, and something of a dramatic form adopted.

It is not the Author's intention formally to announce a system: it was more animating to him to proceed in a different course; and if he shall succeed in conveying to the mind clear thoughts, lively images, and strong feelings, the Reader will have no difficulty in extracting the system for himself. And in the mean time the following passage, taken from the conclusion of the first Book of the *Recluse*, may be acceptable as a kind of *Prospectus* of the design and scope of the whole Poem.

“On Man, on Nature, and on Human Life,
 Musing in Solitude, I oft perceive
 Fair trains of imagery before me rise,
 Accompanied by feelings of delight
 Pure, or with no unpleasing sadness mixed;
 And I am conscious of affecting thoughts
 And dear remembrances, whose presence soothes
 Or elevates the Mind, intent to weigh

P R E F A C E

The good and evil of our mortal state.
—To these emotions, whencesoe'er they come,
Whether from breath of outward circumstance,
Or from the Soul—an impulse to herself,
I would give utterance in numerous Verse.
—Of Truth, of Grandeur, Beauty, Love, and Hope—
And melancholy Fear subdued by Faith;
Of blessed consolations in distress;
Of moral strength, and intellectual power;
Of joy in widest commonalty spread;
Of the individual Mind that keeps her own
Inviolable retirement, subject there
To Conscience only, and the law supreme
Of that Intelligence which governs all;
I sing:—"fit audience let me find though few!"

"So prayed, more gaining than he asked, the Bard,
Holiest of men.—Urania, I shall need
Thy guidance, or a greater Muse, if such
Descend to earth or dwell in highest heaven!
For I must tread on shadowy ground, must sink
Deep—and, aloft ascending, breathe in worlds
To which the heaven of heavens is but a veil.
All strength—all terror, single or in bands,
That ever was put forth in personal form;
Jehovah—with his thunder, and the choir
Of shouting Angels, and the empyreal thrones,
I pass them, unalarmed. Not Chaos, not
The darkest pit of lowest Erebus,
Nor aught of blinder vacancy—scooped out
By help of dreams, can breed such fear and awe
As fall upon us often when we look
Into our Minds, into the Mind of Man,
My haunt, and the main region of my Song.
—Beauty—a living Presence of the earth,
Surpassing the most fair ideal Forms
Which craft of delicate Spirits hath composed
From earth's materials—waits upon my steps;
Pitches her tents before me as I move,
An hourly neighbour. Paradise, and groves
Elysian, Fortunate Fields—like those of old
Sought in the Atlantic Main, why should they be
A history only of departed things,
Or a mere fiction of what never was?
For the discerning intellect of Man,
When wedded to this goodly universe
In love and holy passion, shall find these
A simple produce of the common day.
—I, long before the blissful hour arrives,
Would chant, in lonely peace, the spousal verse

THE EXCURSION

Of this great consummation:—and, by words
 Which speak of nothing more than what we are,
 Would I arouse the sensual from their sleep
 Of Death, and win the vacant and the vain
 To noble raptures; while my voice proclaims
 How exquisitely the individual Mind
 (And the progressive powers perhaps no less
 Of the whole species) to the external World
 Is fitted:—and how exquisitely, too,
 Theme this but little heard of among Men,
 The external World is fitted to the Mind;
 And the creation (by no lower name
 Can it be called) which they with blended might
 Accomplish:—this is our high argument.
 —Such grateful haunts foregoing, if I oft
 Must turn elsewhere—to travel near the tribes
 And fellowships of men, and see ill sights
 Of madding passions mutually inflamed;
 Must hear Humanity in fields and groves
 Pipe solitary anguish; or must hang
 Brooding above the fierce confederate storm
 Of sorrow, barricadoed evermore
 Within the walls of Cities; may these sounds
 Have their authentic comment,—that, even these
 Hearing, I be not downcast or forlorn!
 —Come thou prophetic Spirit, that inspir'st
 The human Soul of universal earth,
 Dreaming on things to come; and dost possess
 A metropolitan Temple in the hearts
 Of mighty Poets; upon me bestow
 A gift of genuine insight; that my Song
 With star-like virtue in its place may shine;
 Shedding benignant influence,—and secure,
 Itself, from all malevolent effect
 Of those mutations that extend their sway
 Throughout the nether sphere!—And if with this
 I mix more lowly matter; with the thing
 Contemplated, describe the Mind and Man
 Contemplating; and who, and what he was,
 The transitory Being that beheld
 This Vision,—when and where, and how he lived;—
 Be not this labour useless. If such theme
 May sort with highest objects, then, dread Power,
 Whose gracious favour is the primal source
 Of all illumination, may my Life
 Express the image of a better time,
 More wise desires, and simpler manners;—nurse
 My Heart in genuine freedom:—all pure thoughts
 Be with me;—so shall thy unfailing love
 Guide, and support, and cheer me to the end!”

THE EXCURSION

BOOK FIRST

The Wanderer

A summer forenoon—The Author reaches a ruined Cottage upon a Common, and there meets with a revered Friend, the Wanderer, of whom he gives an account—The Wanderer while resting under the shade of the Trees that surround the Cottage relates the History of its last Inhabitant.

'T WAS summer, and the sun had mounted high:
Southward, the landscape indistinctly glared
Through a pale steam; but all the northern downs,
In clearest air ascending, shew'd far off
A surface dappled o'er with shadows, flung
From many a brooding cloud; far as the sight
Could reach, those many shadows lay in spots
Determined and unmoved, with steady beams
Of bright and pleasant sunshine interposed.
Pleasant to him who on the soft cool moss
Extends his careless limbs along the front
Of some huge cave, whose rocky ceiling casts
A twilight of its own, an ample shade,
Where the wren warbles; while the dreaming Man,
Half conscious of the soothing melody,
With side-long eye looks out upon the scene,
By that impending covert made more soft,
More low and distant! Other lot was mine;
Yet with good hope that soon I should obtain
As grateful resting-place, and livelier joy.
Across a bare wide Common I was toiling
With languid feet, which by the slippery ground
Were baffled; nor could my weak arm disperse
The host of insects gathering round my face,
And ever with me as I paced along.

Upon that open level stood a Grove,
The wished-for Port to which my steps were bound.
Thither I came, and there—amid the gloom
Spread by a brotherhood of lofty elms—
Appeared a roofless Hut; four naked walls

That stared upon each other! I looked round,
 And to my wish and to my hope espied
 Him whom I sought; a Man of reverend age,
 But stout and hale, for travel unimpaired.
 There was he seen upon the Cottage bench,
 Recumbent in the shade, as if asleep;
 An iron-pointed staff lay at his side.

Him had I marked the day before—alone
 And in the middle of the public way
 Stationed, as if to rest himself, with face
 Turned tow'rds the sun then setting, while that staff
 Afforded to his Figure, as he stood,
 Detained for contemplation or repose,
 Graceful support; the countenance of the Man
 Was hidden from my view, and he himself
 Unrecognised; but, stricken by the sight,
 With slacken'd footsteps I advanced, and soon
 A glad congratulation we exchanged
 At such unthought-of meeting.—For the night
 We parted, nothing willingly; and now
 He by appointment waited for me here,
 Under the shelter of these clustering elms.

We were tried Friends: I from my Childhood up
 Had known him.—In a little Town obscure,
 A market-village, seated in a tract
 Of mountains, where my school-day time was pass'd,
 One room he owned, the fifth part of a house,
 A place to which he drew, from time to time,
 And found a kind of home or harbour there.

He loved me; from a swarm of rosy Boys
 Singled out me, as he in sport would say,
 For my grave looks—too thoughtful for my years.
 As I grew up it was my best delight
 To be his chosen Comrade. Many a time,
 On holidays, we wandered through the woods,
 A pair of random travellers; we sate—
 We walked; he pleased me with his sweet discourse
 Of things which he had seen; and often touch'd
 Abstrusest matter, reasonings of the mind
 Turned inward; or at my request he sang

Old songs—the product of his native hills;
 A skilful distribution of sweet sounds,
 Feeding the soul, and eagerly imbibed
 As cool refreshing Water, by the care
 Of the industrious husbandman, diffused
 Through a parched meadow-ground, in time of drought.
 Still deeper welcome found his pure discourse:
 How precious when in riper days I learn'd
 To weigh with care his words, and to rejoice
 In the plain presence of his dignity!

Oh! many are the Poets that are sown
 By Nature; Men endowed with highest gifts,
 The vision and the faculty divine,
 Yet wanting the accomplishment of Verse,
 (Which in the docile season of their youth
 It was denied them to acquire, through lack
 Of culture and the inspiring aid of books,
 Or haply by a temper too severe,
 Or a nice backwardness afraid of shame),
 Nor having e'er, as life advanced, been led
 By circumstance to take unto the height
 The measure of themselves, these favored Beings,
 All but a scattered few, live out their time,
 Husbanding that which they possess within,
 And go to the grave, unthought of. Strongest minds
 Are often those of whom the noisy world
 Hears least; else surely this Man had not left
 His graces unrevealed and unproclaimed.
 But, as the mind was filled with inward light,
 So not without distinction had he lived,
 Beloved and honoured—far as he was known.
 And some small portion of his eloquent speech,
 And something that may serve to set in view
 The feeling pleasures of his loneliness,
 The doings, observations, which his mind
 Had dealt with—I will here record in verse;
 Which, if with truth it correspond, and sink
 Or rise, as venerable Nature leads,
 The high and tender Muses shall accept
 With gracious smile, deliberately pleased,

And listening Time reward with sacred praise.

Among the hills of Athol he was born:
 There, on a small hereditary Farm,
 An unproductive slip of rugged ground,
 His Father dwelt; and died in poverty;
 While He, whose lowly fortune I retrace,
 The youngest of three sons, was yet a babe,
 A little One—unconscious of their loss.
 But ere he had outgrown his infant days
 His widowed Mother, for a second Mate,
 Espoused the Teacher of the Village School;
 Who on her offspring zealously bestowed
 Needful instruction; not alone in arts
 Which to his humble duties appertained,
 But in the lore of right and wrong, the rule
 Of human kindness, in the peaceful ways
 Of honesty, and holiness severe.
 A virtuous Household though exceeding poor!
 Pure Livers were they all, austere and grave,
 And fearing God; the very Children taught
 Stern self-respect, a reverence for God's word,
 And an habitual piety, maintained
 With strictness scarcely known on English ground.

From his sixth year, the Boy of whom I speak,
 In summer, tended cattle on the Hills;
 But, through the inclement and the perilous days
 Of long-continuing winter, he repaired
 To his Step-father's School, that stood alone,
 Sole Building on a mountain's dreary edge,
 Far from the sight of City spire, or sound
 Of Minster clock! From that bleak Tenement
 He, many an evening to his distant home
 In solitude returning, saw the Hills
 Grow larger in the darkness, all alone
 Beheld the stars come out above his head,
 And travelled through the wood, with no one near
 To whom he might confess the things he saw.
 So the foundations of his mind were laid.
 In such communion, not from terror free,
 While yet a Child, and long before his time,

He had perceived the presence and the power
 Of greatness; and deep feelings had impress'd
 Great objects on his mind, with portraiture
 And colour so distinct, that on his mind
 They lay like substances, and almost seemed
 To haunt the bodily sense. He had received
 (Vigorous in native genius as he was)
 A precious gift; for, as he grew in years,
 With these impressions would he still compare
 All his remembrances, thoughts, shapes, and forms;
 And, being still unsatisfied with aught
 Of dimmer character, he thence attained
 An active power to fasten images
 Upon his brain; and on their pictured lines
 Intensely brooded, even till they acquired
 The liveliness of dreams. Nor did he fail,
 While yet a Child, with a Child's eagerness
 Incessantly to turn his ear and eye
 On all things which the moving seasons brought
 To feed such appetite: nor this alone
 Appeased his yearning:—in the after day
 Of Boyhood, many an hour in caves forlorn,
 And 'mid the hollow depths of naked crags
 He sate, and even in their fix'd lineaments,
 Or from the power of a peculiar eye,
 Or by creative feeling overborne,
 Or by predominance of thought oppress'd,
 Even in their fix'd and steady lineaments
 He traced an ebbing and a flowing mind,
 Expression ever varying!

Thus informed,
 He had small need of books; for many a Tale
 Traditionary, round the mountains hung,
 And many a Legend, peopling the dark woods,
 Nourished Imagination in her growth,
 And gave the Mind that apprehensive power
 By which she is made quick to recognize
 The moral properties and scope of things.
 But eagerly he read, and read again,
 Whate'er the Minister's old Shelf supplied;
 The life and death of Martyrs, who sustained,

With will inflexible, those fearful pangs
 Triumphantly displayed in records left
 Of Persecution, and the Covenant—Times
 Whose echo rings through Scotland to this hour!
 And there by lucky hap had been preserved
 A straggling volume, torn and incomplete,
 That left half-told the preternatural tale,
 Romance of Giants, chronicle of Fiends
 Profuse in garniture of wooden cuts
 Strange and uncouth; dire faces, figures dire,
 Sharp-knee'd, sharp-elbowed, and lean-ankled too,
 With long and ghostly shanks—forms which once seen
 Could never be forgotten!

In his heart

Where Fear sate thus, a cherished visitant,
 Was wanting yet the pure delight of love
 By sound diffused, or by the breathing air,
 Or by the silent looks of happy things,
 Or flowing from the universal face
 Of earth and sky. But he had felt the power
 Of Nature, and already was prepared,
 By his intense conceptions, to receive
 Deeply the lesson deep of love which he,
 Whom Nature, by whatever means, has taught
 To feel intensely, cannot but receive.

From early childhood, even, as hath been said,
 From his sixth year, he had been sent abroad
 In summer to tend herds: such was his task
 Thenceforward 'till the later day of youth.
 O then what soul was his, when, on the tops
 Of the high mountains, he beheld the sun
 Rise up, and bathe the world in light! He looked—
 Ocean and earth, the solid frame of earth
 And ocean's liquid mass, beneath him lay
 In gladness and deep joy. The clouds were touch'd,
 And in their silent faces did he read
 Unutterable love. Sound needed none,
 Nor any voice of joy; his spirit drank
 The spectacle; sensation, soul, and form,
 All melted into him; they swallowed up

His animal being; in them did he live,
 And by them did he live; they were his life.
 In such access of mind, in such high hour
 Of visitation from the living God,
 Thought was not; in enjoyment it expired.
 No thanks he breathed, he proffered no request;
 Rapt into still communion that transcends
 The imperfect offices of prayer and praise,
 His mind was a thanksgiving to the power
 That made him; it was blessedness and love!

A Herdsman on the lonely mountain tops,
 Such intercourse was his, and in this sort
 Was his existence oftentimes *possessed*.
 O then how beautiful, how bright appeared
 The written Promise! He had early learned
 To reverence the Volume which displays
 The mystery, the life which cannot die:
 But in the mountains did he *feel* his faith;
 There did he see the writing;—all things there
 Breathed immortality, revolving life
 And greatness still revolving; infinite:
 There littleness was not; the least of things
 Seemed infinite; and there his spirit shaped
 Her prospects, nor did he believe,—he *saw*.
 What wonder if his being thus became
 Sublime and comprehensive! Low desires,
 Low thoughts had there no place; yet was his heart
 Lowly; for he was meek in gratitude,
 Oft as he called those extacies to mind,
 And whence they flowed; and from them he acquired
 Wisdom, which works through patience; thence he
 learned

In many a calmer hour of sober thought
 To look on Nature with a humble heart,
 Self-questioned where it did not understand,
 And with a superstitious eye of love.

So passed the time; yet to a neighbouring town
 He duly went with what small overplus
 His earnings might supply, and brought away
 The Book which most had tempted his desires

While at the Stall he read. Among the hills
 He gazed upon that mighty Orb of Song
 The divine Milton. Lore of different kind,
 The annual savings of a toilsome life,
 His Step-father supplied; books that explain
 The purer elements of truth involved
 In lines and numbers, and, by charm severe,
 (Especially perceived where nature droops
 And feeling is suppressed,) preserve the mind
 Busy in solitude and poverty.
 These occupations oftentimes deceived
 The listless hours, while in the hollow vale,
 Hollow and green, he lay on the green turf
 In pensive idleness. What could he do
 With blind endeavour, in that lonesome life,
 Thus thirsting daily? Yet still uppermost
 Nature was at his heart as if he felt,
 Though yet he knew not how, a wasting power
 In all things which from her sweet influence
 Might tend to wean him. Therefore with her hues,
 Her forms, and with the spirit of her forms,
 He clothed the nakedness of austere truth.
 While yet he lingered in the rudiments
 Of science, and among her simplest laws,
 His triangles—they were the stars of heaven,
 The silent stars! Oft did he take delight
 To measure th' altitude of some tall crag
 Which is the eagle's birth-place, or some peak
 Familiar with forgotten years, that shews
 Inscribed, as with the silence of the thought,
 Upon it's bleak and visionary sides,
 The history of many a winter storm,—
 Or obscure records of the path of fire.

And thus, before his eighteenth year was told,
 Accumulated feelings pressed his heart
 With still increasing weight; he was o'erpower'd
 By Nature, by the turbulence subdued
 Of his own mind; by mystery and hope,
 And the first virgin passion of a soul
 Communing with the glorious Universe.

Full often wished he that the winds might rage
 When they were silent; far more fondly now
 Than in his earlier season did he love
 Tempestuous nights—the conflict and the sounds
 That live in darkness:—from his intellect
 And from the stillness of abstracted thought
 He asked repose; and I have heard him say
 That often, failing at this time to gain
 The peace required, he scanned the laws of light
 Amid the roar of torrents, where they send
 From hollow clefts up to the clearer air
 A cloud of mist, which in the sunshine frames
 A lasting tablet—for the observer's eye
 Varying it's rainbow hues. But vainly thus,
 And vainly by all other means, he strove
 To mitigate the fever of his heart.

In dreams, in study, and in ardent thought,
 Thus, even from Childhood upward, was he reared;
 For intellectual progress wanting much,
 Doubtless, of needful help—yet gaining more;
 And every moral feeling of his soul
 Strengthened and braced, by breathing in content
 The keen, the wholesome air of poverty,
 And drinking from the well of homely life.
 —But, from past liberty, and tried restraints,
 He now was summoned to select the course
 Of humble industry which promised best
 To yield him no unworthy maintenance.
 The Mother strove to make her Son perceive
 With what advantage he might teach a School
 In the adjoining Village; but the Youth,
 Who of this service made a short essay,
 Found that the wanderings of his thought were then
 A misery to him; that he must resign
 A task he was unable to perform.

That stern yet kindly spirit, Who constrains
 The Savoyard to quit his naked rocks,
 The free-born Swiss to leave his narrow vales,
 (Spirit attached to regions mountainous

Like their own stedfast clouds)—did now impel
 His restless Mind to look abroad with hope.
 —An irksome drudgery seems it to plod on,
 Through dusty ways, in storm, from door to door,
 A vagrant Merchant bent beneath his load!
 Yet do such Travellers find their own delight;
 And their hard service, deemed debasing now,
 Gained merited respect in simpler times;
 When Squire, and Priest, and they who round them dwelt
 In rustic sequestration, all, dependant
 Upon the PEDLAR's toil—supplied their wants,
 Or pleased their fancies, with the wares he brought.
 Not ignorant was the Youth that still no few
 Of his adventurous Countrymen were led
 By perseverance in this Track of life
 To competence and ease;—for him it bore
 Attractions manifold;—and this he chose.
 He asked his Mother's blessing; and, with tears
 Thanking his second Father, asked from him
 Paternal blessings. The good Pair bestowed
 Their farewell benediction, but with hearts
 Foreboding evil. From his native hills
 He wandered far; much did he see of Men,
 Their manners, their enjoyments, and pursuits,
 Their passions, and their feelings; chiefly those
 Essential and eternal in the heart,
 Which, mid the simpler forms of rural life,
 Exist more simple in their elements,
 And speak a plainer language. In the woods,
 A lone Enthusiast, and among the fields,
 Itinerant in this labour, he had passed
 The better portion of his time; and there
 Spontaneously had his affections thriven
 Upon the bounties of the year, and felt
 The liberty of Nature; there he kept
 In solitude and solitary thought
 His mind in a just equipoise of love.
 Serene it was, unclouded by the cares
 Of ordinary life; unvexed, unwarped
 By partial bondage. In his steady course
 No piteous revolutions had he felt,

No wild varieties of joy and grief.
 Unoccupied by sorrow of it's own
 His heart lay open; and, by Nature tuned
 And constant disposition of his thoughts
 To sympathy with Man, he was alive
 To all that was enjoyed where'er he went;
 And all that was endured; for: in himself
 Happy, and quiet in his chearfulness,
 He had no painful pressure from without
 That made him turn aside from wretchedness
 With coward fears. He could *afford* to suffer
 With those whom he saw suffer. Hence it came
 That in our best experience he was rich,
 And in the wisdom of our daily life.
 For hence, minutely, in his various rounds,
 He had observed the progress and decay
 Of many minds, of minds and bodies too;
 The History of many Families;
 How they had prospered; how they were o'erthrown
 By passion or mischance; or such misrule
 Among the unthinking masters of the earth
 As makes the nations groan.—This active course,
 Chosen in youth, through manhood he pursued,
 Till due provision for his modest wants
 Had been obtained;—and, thereupon, resolved
 To pass the remnant of his days—untasked
 With needless services,—from hardship free.
 His Calling laid aside, he lived at ease:
 But still he loved to pace the public roads
 And the wild paths; and, when the summer's warmth
 Invited him, would often leave his home
 And journey far, revisiting those scenes
 Which to his memory were most endeared.
 —Vigorous in health, of hopeful spirits, untouched
 By wordly-mindedness or anxious care;
 Observant, studious, thoughtful, and refreshed
 By knowledge gathered up from day to day;—
 Thus had he lived a long and innocent life.

The Scottish Church, both on himself and those
 With whom from childhood he grew up, had held

The strong hand of her purity; and still
 Had watched him with an unrelenting eye.
 This he remembered in his riper age
 With gratitude, and reverential thoughts.
 But by the native vigour of his mind,
 By his habitual wanderings out of doors,
 By loneliness, and goodness, and kind works,
 Whate'er in docile childhood or in youth
 He had imbibed of fear or darker thought
 Was melted all away; so true was this
 That sometimes his religion seemed to me
 Self-taught, as of a dreamer in the woods;
 Who to the model of his own pure heart
 Framed his belief, as grace divine inspired,
 Or human reason dictated with awe.
 —And surely never did there live on earth
 A Man of kindlier nature. The rough sports
 And teasing ways of Children vexed not him,
 Nor could he bid them from his presence, tired
 With questions and importunate demands:
 Indulgent listener was he to the tongue
 Of garrulous age; nor did the sick man's tale,
 To his fraternal sympathy addressed,
 Obtain reluctant hearing.

Plain his garb

Such as might suit a rustic sire, prepared
 For sabbath duties; yet he was a Man
 Whom no one could have passed without remark.
 Active and nervous was his gait; his limbs
 And his whole figure breathed intelligence.
 Time had compressed the freshness of his cheek
 Into a narrower circle of deep red
 But had not tamed his eye; that under brows
 Shaggy and grey had meanings which it brought
 From years of youth; which, like a Being made
 Of many Beings, he had wondrous skill
 To blend with knowledge of the years to come,
 Human, or such as lie beyond the grave.

So was He framed; and such his course of life
 Who now, with no Appendage but a Staff,
 The prized memorial of relinquish'd toils,
 Upon that Cottage bench reposed his limbs,
 Screened from the sun. Supine the Wanderer lay,
 His eyes as if in drowsiness half shut,
 The shadows of the breezy elms above
 Dappling his face. He had not heard my steps
 As I approached; and near him did I stand
 Unnotic'd in the shade, some minutes' space.
 At length I hailed him, seeing that his hat
 Was moist with water-drops, as if the brim
 Had newly scooped a running stream. He rose,
 And ere the pleasant greeting that ensued
 Was ended, "'Tis," said I, "a burning day;
 My lips are parched with thirst, but you, I guess,
 Have somewhere found relief." He, at the word,
 Pointing towards a sweet-briar, bade me climb
 The fence hard by, where that aspiring shrub
 Looked out upon the road. It was a plot
 Of garden-ground run wild, it's matted weeds
 Marked with the steps of those, whom, as they pass'd
 The gooseberry trees that shot in long lank slips,
 Or currants hanging from their leafless stems
 In scanty strings, had tempted to o'erleap
 The broken wall. I looked around, and there,
 Where two tall hedge-rows of thick alder boughs
 Joined in a cold damp nook, espied a Well
 Shrouded with willow-flowers and plummy fern.
 My thirst I slaked, and from the chearless spot
 Withdrawing, straightway to the shade returned
 Where sate the Old Man on the Cottage bench;
 And, while, beside him, with uncovered head,
 I yet was standing, freely to respire,
 And cool my temples in the fanning air,
 Thus did he speak. "I see around me here
 Things which you cannot see: we die, my Friend,
 Nor we alone, but that which each man loved
 And prized in his peculiar nook of earth
 Dies with him, or is changed; and very soon
 Even of the good is no memorial left.

—The Poets, in their elegies and songs
 Lamenting the departed, call the groves,
 They call upon the hills and streams to mourn,
 And senseless rocks; nor idly; for they speak,
 In these their invocations, with a voice
 Obedient to the strong creative power
 Of human passion. Sympathies there are
 More tranquil, yet perhaps of kindred birth,
 That steal upon the meditative mind,
 And grow with thought. Beside yon Spring I stood,
 And eyed its waters till we seemed to feel
 One sadness, they and I. For them a bond
 Of brotherhood is broken: time has been
 When, every day, the touch of human hand
 Dislodged the natural sleep that binds them up
 In mortal stillness; and they minister'd
 To human comfort. As I stooped to drink,
 Upon the slimy foot-stone I espied
 The useless fragment of a wooden bowl,
 Green with the moss of years; a pensive sight
 That moved my heart!—recalling former days
 When I could never pass that road but She
 Who lived within these walls, at my approach,
 A Daughter's welcome gave me; and I loved her
 As my own child. O Sir! the good die first,
 And they whose hearts are dry as summer dust
 Burn to the socket. Many a Passenger
 Hath blessed poor Margaret for her gentle looks,
 When she upheld the cool refreshment drawn
 From that forsaken Spring; and no one came
 But he was welcome; no one went away
 But that it seemed she loved him. She is dead,
 The light extinguished of her lonely Hut,
 The Hut itself abandoned to decay,
 And She forgotten in the quiet grave!

“I speak,” continued he, “of One whose stock
 Of virtues bloom'd beneath this lowly roof.
 She was a Woman of a steady mind,
 Tender and deep in her excess of love,
 Not speaking much, pleased rather with the joy

Of her own thoughts: by some especial care
 Her temper had been framed, as if to make
 A Being—who by adding love to peace
 Might live on earth a life of happiness.
 Her wedded Partner lacked not on his side
 The humble worth that satisfied her heart:
 Frugal, affectionate, sober, and withal
 Keenly industrious. She with pride would tell
 That he was often seated at his loom,
 In summer, ere the Mower was abroad
 Among the dewy grass,—in early spring,
 Ere the last Star had vanished.—They who passed
 At evening, from behind the garden fence
 Might hear his busy spade, which he would ply,
 After his daily work, until the light
 Had failed, and every leaf and flower were lost
 In the dark hedges. So their days were spent
 In peace and comfort; and a pretty Boy
 Was their best hope,—next to the God in Heaven.

Not twenty years ago, but you I think
 Can scarcely bear it now in mind, there came
 Two blighting seasons when the fields were left
 With half a harvest. It pleased heaven to add
 A worse affliction in the plague of war;
 This happy Land was stricken to the heart!
 A Wanderer then among the Cottages
 I, with my freight of winter raiment, saw
 The hardships of that season; many rich
 Sank down, as in a dream, among the poor;
 And of the poor did many cease to be
 And their place knew them not. Meanwhile abridg'd
 Of daily comforts, gladly reconciled
 To numerous self-denials, Margaret
 Went struggling on through those calamitous years
 With chearful hope: but ere the second autumn
 Her life's true Help-mate on a sick-bed lay,
 Smitten with perilous fever. In disease
 He lingered long; and when his strength return'd,
 He found the little he had stored, to meet
 The hour of accident or crippling age,

Was all consumed. Two children had they now,
 One newly born. As I have said, it was
 A time of trouble; shoals of Artisans
 Were from their daily labour turn'd adrift
 To seek their bread from public charity,
 They, and their wives and children—happier far
 Could they have lived as do the little birds
 That peck along the hedges, or the Kite
 That makes his dwelling on the mountain Rocks!

A sad reverse it was for Him who long
 Had filled with plenty, and possess'd in peace,
 This lonely Cottage. At the door he stood,
 And whistled many a snatch of merry tunes
 That had no mirth in them; or with his knife
 Carved uncouth figures on the heads of sticks—
 Then, not less idly, sought, through every nook
 In house or garden, any casual work
 Of use or ornament; and with a strange,
 Amusing, yet uneasy novelty,
 He blended, where he might, the various tasks
 Of summer, autumn, winter, and of spring.
 But this endured not; his good humour soon
 Became a weight in which no pleasure was:
 And poverty brought on a petted mood
 And a sore temper: day by day he drooped,
 And he would leave his work—and to the Town,
 Without an errand, would direct his steps,
 Or wander here and there among the fields.
 One while he would speak lightly of his Babes,
 And with a cruel tongue: at other times
 He toss'd them with a false unnatural joy:
 And 'twas a rueful thing to see the looks
 Of the poor innocent children. 'Every smile,'
 Said Margaret to me, here beneath these trees,
 'Made my heart bleed.'"

At this the Wanderer paused;
 And, looking up to those enormous Elms,
 He said, "Tis now the hour of deepest noon.—
 At this still season of repose and peace,
 This hour, when all things which are not at rest

Are chearful; while this multitude of flies
 Is filling all the air with melody;
 Why should a tear be in an Old Man's eye?
 Why should we thus, with an untoward mind,
 And in the weakness of humanity,
 From natural wisdom turn our hearts away,
 To natural comfort shut our eyes and ears,
 And, feeding on disquiet, thus disturb
 The calm of nature with our restless thoughts?"

HE spake with somewhat of a solemn tone:
 But, when he ended, there was in his face
 Such easy chearfulness, a look so mild,
 That for a little time it stole away
 All recollection, and that simple Tale
 Passed from my mind like a forgotten sound.
 A while on trivial things we held discourse,
 To me soon tasteless. In my own despite
 I thought of that poor Woman as of one
 Whom I had known and loved. He had rehearsed
 Her homely Tale with such familiar power,
 With such an active countenance, an eye
 So busy, that the things of which he spake
 Seemed present; and, attention now relax'd,
 There was a heart-felt chillness in my veins.—
 I rose; and, turning from the breezy shade,
 Went forth into the open air, and stood
 To drink the comfort of the warmer sun.
 Long time I had not staid, ere, looking round
 Upon that tranquil Ruin, I return'd,
 And begged of the Old Man that, for my sake,
 He would resume his story.—

He replied,

"It were a wantonness, and would demand
 Severe reproof, if we were Men whose hearts
 Could hold vain dalliance with the misery
 Even of the dead; contented thence to draw
 A momentary pleasure, never marked
 By reason, barren of all future good.
 But we have known that there is often found

In mournful thoughts, and always might be found,
 A power to virtue friendly; were't not so,
 I am a Dreamer among men, indeed
 An idle Dreamer! 'Tis a common Tale,
 An ordinary sorrow of Man's life,
 A tale of silent suffering, hardly clothed
 In bodily form.—But, without further bidding,
 I will proceed.—

While thus it fared with them,
 To whom this Cottage, till those hapless years,
 Had been a blessed home, it was my chance
 To travel in a Country far remote.
 And glad I was, when, halting by yon gate
 That leads from the green lane, once more I saw
 These lofty elm-trees. Long I did not rest:
 With many pleasant thoughts I cheer'd my way
 O'er the flat Common.—Having reached the door
 I knock'd,—and, when I entered with the hope
 Of usual greeting, Margaret looked at me
 A little while; then turn'd her head away
 Speechless,—and sitting down upon a chair
 Wept bitterly. I wist not what to do,
 Or how to speak to her. Poor Wretch! at last
 She rose from off her seat, and then,—O Sir!
 I cannot *tell* how she pronounced my name.—
 With fervent love, and with a face of grief
 Unutterably helpless, and a look
 That seemed to cling upon me, she enquired
 If I had seen her Husband. As she spake
 A strange surprize and fear came to my heart,
 Nor had I power to answer ere she told
 That he had disappear'd—not two months gone.
 He left his House: two wretched days had pass'd,
 And on the third, as wistfully she rais'd
 Her head from off her pillow, to look forth,
 Like one in trouble, for returning light,
 Within her chamber-casement she espied
 A folded paper, lying as if placed
 To meet her waking eyes. This tremblingly
 She open'd—found no writing, but therein
 Pieces of money carefully enclosed,

Silver and gold.—‘I shuddered at the sight,’
 Said Margaret, ‘for I knew it was his hand
 Which placed it there; and ere that day was ended,
 That long and anxious day! I learned from One
 Sent hither by my Husband to impart
 The heavy news,—that he had joined a Troop
 Of Soldiers, going to a distant Land.
 —He left me thus—he could not gather heart
 To take a farewell of me; for he fear’d
 That I should follow with my Babes, and sink
 Beneath the misery of that wandering Life.’

This Tale did Margaret tell with many tears:
 And when she ended I had little power
 To give her comfort, and was glad to take
 Such words of hope from her own mouth as served
 To cheer us both:—but long we had not talked
 Ere we built up a pile of better thoughts,
 And with a brighter eye she look’d around
 As if she had been shedding tears of joy.
 We parted.—’Twas the time of early spring;
 I left her busy with her garden tools;
 And well remember, o’er that fence she looked,
 And, while I paced along the foot-way path,
 Called out, and sent a blessing after me,
 With tender cheerfulness; and with a voice
 That seem’d the very sound of happy thoughts.

I roved o’er many a hill and many a dale,
 With my accustomed load; in heat and cold,
 Through many a wood, and many an open ground,
 In sunshine and in shade, in wet and fair,
 Drooping, or blithe of heart, as might befall;
 My best companions now the driving winds,
 And now the ‘trotting brooks’ and whispering trees,
 And now the music of my own sad steps,
 With many a short-lived thought that pass’d between,
 And disappeared.—I journey’d back this way
 Towards the wane of Summer; when the wheat
 Was yellow; and the soft and bladed grass
 Springing afresh had o’er the hay-field spread

Its tender verdure. At the door arrived,
 I found that she was absent. In the shade,
 Where now we sit, I waited her return.
 Her Cottage, then a chearful Object, wore
 Its customary look,—only, I thought,
 The honeysuckle, crowding round the porch,
 Hung down in heavier tufts: and that bright weed,
 The yellow stone-crop, suffered to take root
 Along the window's edge, profusely grew,
 Blinding the lower panes. I turned aside,
 And strolled into her garden. It appeared
 To lag behind the season, and had lost
 Its pride of neatness. From the border lines
 Composed of daisy and resplendent thrift,
 Flowers straggling forth had on those paths encroached
 Which they were used to deck:—Carnations, once
 Prized for surpassing beauty, and no less
 For the peculiar pains they had required,
 Declined their languid heads—without support.
 The cumbrous bind-weed, with its wreaths and bells,
 Had twined about her two small rows of pease,
 And dragged them to the earth.—Ere this an hour
 Was wasted.—Back I turned my restless steps,
 And, as I walked before the door, it chanced
 A Stranger passed; and, guessing whom I sought,
 He said that she was used to ramble far.—
 The sun was sinking in the west; and now
 I sate with sad impatience. From within
 Her solitary Infant cried aloud;
 Then, like a blast that dies away self-stilled,
 The voice was silent. From the bench I rose;
 But neither could divert nor soothe my thoughts.
 The spot, though fair, was very desolate—
 The longer I remained more desolate.
 And, looking round, I saw the corner stones,
 Till then unnotic'd, on either side the door
 With dull red stains discolour'd, and stuck o'er
 With tufts and hairs of wool, as if the Sheep,
 That fed upon the Common, thither came
 Familiarly; and found a couching-place
 Even at her threshold. Deeper shadows fell

From these tall elms;—the Cottage-clock struck eight;—
 I turned, and saw her distant a few steps.
 Her face was pale and thin, her figure too
 Was changed. As she unlocked the door, she said,
 'It grieves me you have waited here so long,
 But, in good truth, I've wandered much of late,
 And, sometimes,—to my shame I speak, have need
 Of my best prayers to bring me back again.'
 While on the board she spread our evening meal,
 She told me,—interrupting not the work
 Which gave employment to her listless hands,
 That she had parted with her elder Child;
 To a kind Master on a distant farm
 Now happily apprenticed—'I perceive
 You look at me, and you have cause; to-day
 I have been travelling far; and many days
 About the fields I wander, knowing this
 Only, that what I seek I cannot find.
 And so I waste my time: for I am changed;
 And to myself,' said she, 'have done much wrong
 And to this helpless Infant. I have slept
 Weeping, and weeping I have waked; my tears
 Have flowed as if my body were not such
 As others are; and I could never die.
 But I am now in mind and in my heart
 More easy; and I hope,' said she, 'that heaven
 Will give me patience to endure the things
 Which I behold at home.' It would have grieved
 Your very soul to see her; Sir, I feel
 The story linger in my heart: I fear
 'Tis long and tedious; but my spirit clings
 To that poor Woman:—so familiarly
 Do I perceive her manner, and her look,
 And presence, and so deeply do I feel
 Her goodness, that, not seldom, in my walks
 A momentary trance comes over me;
 And to myself I seem to muse on One
 By sorrow laid asleep;—or borne away,
 A human being destined to awake
 To human life, or something very near
 To human life, when he shall come again

For whom she suffered. Yes, it would have grieved
 Your very soul to see her: evermore
 Her eyelids drooped, her eyes were downward cast;
 And, when she at her table gave me food,
 She did not look at me. Her voice was low,
 Her body was subdued. In every act
 Pertaining to her house affairs, appeared
 The careless stillness of a thinking mind
 Self-occupied; to which all outward things
 Are like an idle matter. Still she sighed,
 But yet no motion of the breast was seen,
 No heaving of the heart. While by the fire
 We sate together, sighs came on my ear,
 I knew not how, and hardly whence they came.

Ere my departure to her care I gave,
 For her Son's use, some tokens of regard,
 Which with a look of welcome She received;
 And I exhorted her to have her trust
 In God's good love, and seek his help by prayer.
 I took my staff, and, when I kissed her babe
 The tears stood in her eyes. I left her then
 With the best hope and comfort I could give;
 She thanked me for my wish;—but for my hope
 Methought she did not thank me.

I returned,
 And took my rounds along this road again
 Ere on its sunny bank the primrose flower
 Peeped forth, to give an earnest of the Spring.
 I found her sad and drooping; she had learned
 No tidings of her Husband; if he lived
 She knew not that he lived; if he were dead
 She knew not he was dead. She seem'd the same
 In person and appearance; but her House
 Bespake a sleepy hand of negligence.
 The floor was neither dry nor neat, the hearth
 Was comfortless, and her small lot of books,
 Which, in the Cottage window, heretofore
 Had been piled up against the corner panes
 In seemly order, now, with straggling leaves
 Lay scattered here and there, open or shut,

As they had chanced to fall. Her Infant Babe
 Had from its Mother caught the trick of grief,
 And sighed among its playthings. Once again
 I turned towards the garden gate, and saw,
 More plainly still, that poverty and grief
 Were now come nearer to her: weeds defaced
 The harden'd soil, and knots of wither'd grass;
 No ridges there appeared of clear black mold,
 No winter greenness; of her herbs and flowers,
 It seemed the better part were gnawed away
 Or trampled into earth; a chain of straw,
 Which had been twined about the slender stem
 Of a young apple-tree, lay at its root;
 The bark was nibbled round by truant Sheep.
 —Margaret stood near, her Infant in her arms,
 And, noting that my eye was on the tree,
 She said, 'I fear it will be dead and gone
 Ere Robert come again.' Towards the House
 Together we returned; and she enquired
 If I had any hope:—but for her Babe
 And for her little orphan Boy, she said,
 She had no wish to live, that she must die
 Of sorrow. Yet I saw the idle loom
 Still in its place; his Sunday garments hung
 Upon the self-same nail; his very staff
 Stood undisturbed behind the door. And when,
 In bleak December, I retraced this way,
 She told me that her little Babe was dead,
 And she was left alone. She now, released
 From her maternal cares, had taken up
 The employment common through these Wilds, and
 gain'd
 By spinning hemp a pittance for herself;
 And for this end had hired a neighbour's Boy
 To give her needful help. That very time
 Most willingly she put her work aside,
 And walked with me along the miry road
 Heedless how far; and, in such piteous sort
 That any heart had ached to hear her, begged
 That, wheresoe'er I went, I still would ask
 For him whom she had lost. We parted then,

Our final parting; for from that time forth
 Did many seasons pass ere I return'd
 Into this tract again.

Nine tedious years;
 From their first separation, nine long years,
 She lingered in unquiet widowhood;
 A Wife and Widow. Needs must it have been
 A sore heart-wasting! I have heard, my Friend,
 That in yon arbour oftentimes she sate
 Alone, through half the vacant Sabbath-day,
 And if a dog passed by she still would quit
 The shade, and look abroad. On this old Bench
 For hours she sate; and evermore her eye
 Was busy in the distance, shaping things
 That made her heart beat quick. You see that path,
 Now faint,—the grass has crept o'er its grey line;
 There, to and fro, she paced through many a day
 Of the warm summer, from a belt of hemp
 That girt her waist, spinning the long drawn thread
 With backward steps. Yet ever as there pass'd
 A man whose garments shewed the Soldier's red,
 Or crippled Mendicant in Sailor's garb,
 The little Child who sate to turn the wheel
 Ceas'd from his task; and she with faltering voice
 Made many a fond enquiry; and when they,
 Whose presence gave no comfort, were gone by,
 Her heart was still more sad. And by yon gate,
 That bars the Traveller's road, she often stood,
 And when a stranger Horseman came, the latch
 Would lift, and in his face look wistfully;
 Most happy, if, from aught discovered there
 Of tender feeling, she might dare repeat
 The same sad question. Meanwhile her poor Hut
 Sank to decay: for he was gone—whose hand,
 At the first nipping of October frost,
 Closed up each chink, and with fresh bands of straw
 Chequered the green-grown thatch. And so she lived
 Through the long winter, reckless and alone;
 Until her House by frost, and thaw, and rain,
 Was sapped; and while she slept the nightly damps
 Did chill her breast; and in the stormy day

Her tattered clothes were ruffled by the wind;
 Even at the side of her own fire. Yet still
 She loved this wretched spot, nor would for worlds
 Have parted hence; and still that length of road,
 And this rude bench, one torturing hope endeared,
 Fast rooted at her heart: and here, my Friend,
 In sickness she remained; and here she died,
 Last human Tenant of these ruined Walls."

The Old Man ceased: he saw that I was moved;
 From that low Bench, rising instinctively
 I turn'd aside in weakness, nor had power
 To thank him for the Tale which he had told.
 I stood, and leaning o'er the Garden wall,
 Reviewed that Woman's sufferings; and it seemed
 To comfort me while with a Brother's love
 I bless'd her—in the impotence of grief.
 At length towards the Cottage I returned
 Fondly,—and traced with interest more mild,
 That secret spirit of humanity
 Which, mid the calm oblivious tendencies
 Of Nature, mid her plants, and weeds, and flowers,
 And silent overgrowings, still survived.
 The Old Man, noting this, resumed, and said,
 "My Friend! enough to sorrow you have given,
 The purposes of wisdom ask no more;
 Be wise and chearful; and no longer read
 The forms of things with an unworthy eye.
 She sleeps in the calm earth, and peace is here.
 I well remember that those very plumes,
 Those weeds, and the high spear-grass on that wall,
 By mist and silent rain-drops silver'd o'er,
 As once I passed, did to my heart convey
 So still an image of tranquillity,
 So calm and still, and looked so beautiful
 Amid the uneasy thoughts which filled my mind,
 That what we feel of sorrow and despair
 From ruin and from change, and all the grief
 The passing shews of Being leave behind,
 Appeared an idle dream, that could not live
 Where meditation was. I turned away

And walked along my road in happiness."

He ceased. Ere long the sun declining shot
A slant and mellow radiance, which began
To fall upon us, while beneath the trees
We sate on that low Bench: and now we felt,
Admonished thus, the sweet hour coming on.
A linnet warbled from those lofty elms,
A thrush sang loud, and other melodies,
At distance heard, peopled the milder air.
The Old Man rose, and, with a sprightly mien
Of hopeful preparation, grasped his Staff:
Together casting then a farewell look
Upon those silent walls, we left the Shade;
And, ere the Stars were visible, had reached
A Village Inn,—our Evening resting-place.

THE RIVER DUDDON: A SERIES OF SONNETS

TOPOGRAPHICAL DESCRIPTION OF THE
COUNTRY OF THE LAKES IN THE NORTH OF ENGLAND

The volume of 1820 gathered together important and varied work which had been planned and written over a long period. The sonnets constituting *The River Duddon* had been written between 1806 and 1820 and were now fashioned into a "tour" [compare Wordsworth's treatment of the *Memorials of a Tour in Scotland*, 1803]. *Vaudracour and Julia*, "written as an Episode, in a work from which its length may perhaps exclude it," was taken, much revised, from *The Prelude*, then unpublished [see *The Prelude*, Book IX, 554 ff., pp. 481 ff.]; *Dion*, the adaptation of *The Prioress's Tale*, *The Ode, Composed Upon an Evening of Extraordinary Splendor and Beauty*, also appeared here for the first time.

In 1849 Wordsworth said, "My sonnets to the river Duddon have been wonderfully popular. Properly speaking, nothing that I ever wrote has been popular, but they have been more warmly received." Only six of the thirty-three sonnets are included here.

This volume also contained the second version of the *Topographical Description of the Country of the Lakes in the North of England*. It had first appeared anonymously in 1810 as an Introduction to *Select Views in Cumberland, Westmoreland, and Lancashire, by the Rev. Joseph Wilkinson*, published by Ackermann. After its appearance, enlarged, in the 1820 volume, it was reissued in 1822 as *A Description of the Scenery of the Lakes in the North of England*, "Third Edition (now published separately) With Additions And Illustrative Remarks Upon the Scenery of the Alps". In 1828 a fourth edition appeared and in 1835 it was published in its fullest form as *A Guide Through the District of the Lakes in the North of England, With a Description of the Scenery, etc. For the Use of Tourists and Residents*. The 1820 text has been used here.

THE RIVER DUDDON

A SERIES OF SONNETS

SOLE listener, Duddon! to the breeze that play'd
With thy clear voice, I caught the fitful sound
Wafted o'er sullen moss and craggy mound,
Unfruitful solitudes, that seem'd to upbraid
The sun in heaven!—but now, to form a shade
For Thee, green alders have together wound
Their foliage; ashes flung their arms around;
And birch-trees risen in silver colonnade.
And thou hast also tempted here to rise,
'Mid sheltering pines, this Cottage rude and grey;
Whose ruddy children, by the mother's eyes
Carelessly watch'd, sport through the summer day,
Thy pleas'd associates:—light as endless May
On infant bosoms lonely Nature lies.

THE STEPPING-STONES

THE struggling Rill insensibly is grown
Into a Brook of loud and stately march,
Cross'd ever and anon by plank and arch;
And, for like use, lo! what might seem a zone
Chosen for ornament; stone match'd with stone
In studied symmetry, with interspace
For the clear waters to pursue their race
Without restraint.—How swiftly have they flown!
Succeeding—still succeeding! Here the Child
Puts, when the high-swoln Flood runs fierce and wild,
His budding courage to the proof;—and here
Declining Manhood learns to note the sly
And sure encroachments of infirmity,
Thinking how fast time runs, life's end how near!

SEATHWAITE CHAPEL

SACRED Religion, "mother of form and fear,"
 Dread Arbitress of mutable respect,
 New rites ordaining when the old are wreck'd,
 Or cease to please the fickle worshipper;
 If one strong wish may be embosomed here,
 Mother of Love! for this deep vale, protect
 Truth's holy lamp, pure source of bright effect,
 Gifted to purge the vapoury atmosphere
 That seeks to stifle it;—as in those days
 When this low Pile a Gospel Teacher knew,
 Whose good works formed an endless retinue:
 Such Priest as Chaucer sang in fervent lays;
 Such as the heaven-taught skill of Herbert drew;
 And tender Goldsmith crown'd with deathless praise!

THE KIRK OF ULPHA to the Pilgrim's eye
 Is welcome as a Star, that doth present
 Its shining forehead through the peaceful rent
 Of a black cloud diffused o'er half the sky;
 Or as a fruitful palm-tree towering high
 O'er the parched waste beside an Arab's tent;
 Or the Indian tree whose branches, downward bent,
 Take root again, a boundless canopy.
 How sweet were leisure! could it yield no more
 Than mid that wave-washed Church-yard to recline,
 From pastoral graves extracting thoughts divine;
 Or there to pace, and mark the summits hoar
 Of distant moon-lit mountains faintly shine,
 Sooth'd by the unseen River's gentle roar.

NOT hurled precipitous from steep to steep;
 Lingering no more mid flower-enamelled lands
 And blooming thickets; nor by rocky bands
 Held;—but in radiant progress tow'rd the Deep
 Where mightiest rivers into powerless sleep
 Sink, and forget their nature;—*now* expands
 Majestic Duddon, over smooth flat sands,
 Gliding in silence with unfettered sweep!
 Beneath an ampler sky a region wide
 Is opened round him;—hamlets, towers, and towns,
 And blue-topped hills, behold him from afar;
 In stately mien to sovereign Thames allied,
 Spreading his bosom under Kentish downs,
 With Commerce freighted or triumphant War.

CONCLUSION

I THOUGHT of Thee, my partner and my guide,
 As being past away.—Vain sympathies!
 For, *backward*, Duddon! as I cast my eyes,
 I see what was, and is, and will abide;
 Still glides the Stream, and shall for ever glide;
 The Form remains, the Function never dies;
 While *we*, the brave, the mighty, and the wise,
 We Men, who in our morn of youth defied
 The elements, must vanish;—be it so!
 Enough, if something from our hands have power
 To live, and act, and serve the future hour;
 And if, as tow'rd the silent tomb we go,
 Thro' love, thro' hope, and faith's transcendant dower,
 We feel that we are greater than we know.

TOPOGRAPHICAL DESCRIPTION OF THE COUNTRY OF THE LAKES IN THE NORTH OF ENGLAND

This Essay, which was published several years ago as an Introduction to some Views of the Lakes, by the Rev. Joseph Wilkinson, (an expensive work, and necessarily of limited circulation,) is now, with emendations and additions, attached to these volumes; from a consciousness of its having been written in the same spirit which dictated several of the poems, and from a belief that it will tend materially to illustrate them.

AT Lucerne in Switzerland there existed, some years ago, a model of the Alpine country which encompasses the Lake of the four Cantons. The spectator ascended a little platform, and saw mountains, lakes, glaciers, rivers, woods, waterfalls, and valleys with their cottages and every other object contained in them, lying at his feet; all things being represented in their appropriate colours. It may be easily conceived that this exhibition afforded an exquisite delight to the imagination, which was thus tempted to wander at will from valley to valley, from mountain to mountain, through the deepest recesses of the Alps. But it supplied also a more substantial pleasure; for the sublime and beautiful region, with all its hidden treasures, and their bearings and relations to each other, was thereby comprehended and understood at once.

Something of this kind (as far as it can be performed by words, which must needs be inadequately) will here be attempted in respect to the Lakes in the north of England, and the vales and mountains enclosing and surrounding them. The delineation if tolerably executed will in some instances communicate to the traveller, who has already seen the objects, new information; and will assist in giving to his recollections a more orderly arrangement than his own opportunities of observing may have permitted him to make; while it will be still more useful to the future traveller, by directing his attention at once to distinctions in things which, without such previous aid, a length of time only could enable him to discover. It is hoped, also, that this Essay may become generally serviceable by leading to habits of more exact and considerate observation than, as far as the writer knows, have hitherto been applied to local scenery.

To begin, then, with the main outlines of the country. I know not how to give the reader a distinct image of these more readily,

than by requesting him to place himself with me, in imagination, upon some given point; let it be the top of either of the mountains, Great Gavel, or Scawfell; or, rather, let us suppose our station to be a cloud hanging midway between those two mountains, at not more than half a mile's distance from the summit of each, and not many yards above their highest elevation; we shall then see stretched at our feet a number of valleys, not fewer than nine, diverging from the point, on which we are supposed to stand, like spokes from the nave of a wheel. First, we note, lying to the south-east, the vale of Langdale, which will conduct the eye to the long Lake of Winandermere stretched nearly to the sea; or rather to the sands of the vast bay of Morcamb, serving here for the rim of this imaginary wheel;—let us trace it in a direction from the south-east towards the south, and we shall next fix our eyes upon the vale of Coniston, running up likewise from the sea, but not (as all the other valleys do) to the nave of the wheel, and therefore it may not be inaptly represented as a broken spoke sticking in the rim. Looking forth again, with an inclination towards the west, immediately at our feet lies the Vale of Duddon, in which is no lake, but a copious stream winding among fields, rocks, and mountains, and terminating its course in the sands of Duddon. The fourth valley next to be observed, viz. that of Eskdale, is of the same general character as the last, yet beautifully discriminated from it by peculiar features. Next, almost due west, look down upon, and into, the deep valley of Wastdale, with its little chapel and half a dozen neat scattered dwellings, a plain of meadow and corn-ground intersected with stone walls apparently innumerable, like a large piece of lawless patch-work, or an array of mathematical figures, such as in the ancient schools of geometry might have been sportively and fantastically traced out upon sand. Beyond this little fertile plain lies, within its bed of steep mountains, the long, narrow, stern, and desolate Lake of Wastdale; and beyond this a dusky tract of level ground conducts the eye to the Irish Sea. The several vales of Ennerdale and Buttermere, with their lakes, next present themselves; and lastly, the vale of Borrowdale, of which that of Keswick is only a continuation, stretching due north, brings us to a point nearly opposite to the vale of Winandermere with which we began. From this it will appear, that the image of a wheel, thus far exact, is little more than half complete; but the deficiency on the eastern side may be supplied by the vales of Wytheburn, Ulswater, Hawswater, and the vale of Grasmere and Rydal; none of these, however,

run up to the central point between Great Gavel and Scawfell. From this, hitherto our central point, take a flight of not more than three or four miles eastward to the ridge of Helvellyn, and you will look down upon Wytheburn and St. John's Vale, which are a branch of the vale of Keswick; upon Ulswater, stretching due east, and not far beyond to the south-east, (though from this point not visible,) lie the vale and lake of Hawswater; and lastly, the vale of Grasmere, Rydal, and Ambleside, brings you back to Winandermere, thus completing, though on the eastern side in a somewhat irregular manner, the representative figure of the wheel.

Such, concisely given, is the general topographical view of the country of the Lakes in the north of England; and it may be observed, that, from the circumference to the centre, that is, from the sea or plain country to the mountain stations specified, there is—in the several ridges that enclose these vales and divide them from each other, I mean in the forms and surfaces, first of the swelling grounds, next of the hills and rocks, and lastly of the mountains—an ascent of almost regular gradation from elegance and richness to their highest point of grandeur. It follows therefore from this, first, that these rocks, hills, and mountains, must present themselves to view in stages rising above each other, the mountains clustering together towards the central point; and, next, that an observer familiar with the several vales, must, from their various position in relation to the sun, have had before his eyes every possible embellishment of beauty, dignity, and splendour, which light and shadow can bestow upon objects so diversified. For example, in the vale of Winandermere, if the spectator looks for gentle and lovely scenes, his eye is turned towards the south; if for the grand, towards the north; in the vale of Keswick, which (as hath been said) lies almost due north of this, it is directly the reverse. Hence, when the sun is setting in summer far to the north-west, it is seen by the spectator from the shores or breast of Winandermere, resting among the summits of the loftiest mountains, some of which will perhaps be half or wholly hid by clouds, or by the blaze of light which the orb diffuses around it; and the surface of the lake will reflect before the eye correspondent colours through every variety of beauty, and through all degrees of splendour. In the vale of Keswick, at the same period, the sun sets over the humbler regions of the landscapes, and showers down upon *them* the radiance which at once veils and glorifies,—sending forth, meanwhile, broad streams of rosy, crimson, purple, or golden

light, towards the grand mountains in the south and south-east, which, thus illuminated, with all their projections and cavities, and with an intermixture of solemn shadows, are seen distinctly through a cool and clear atmosphere. Of course, there is as marked a difference between the *noontide* appearance of these two opposite vales. The bedimmed haze that overspreads the south, and the clear atmosphere and determined shadows of the clouds in the north, at the same time of the day, are each seen in these several vales, with a contrast as striking. The reader will easily perceive in what degree the intermediate vales partake of the same variety.

I do not indeed know any tract of country in which, within so narrow a compass, may be found an equal variety in the influences of light and shadow upon the sublime or beautiful features of landscape; and it is owing to the combined circumstances to which I have directed the reader's attention. From a point between Great Gavel and Scawfell, a shepherd would not require more than an hour to descend into any one of eight of the principal vales by which he would be surrounded; and all the others lie (with the exception of Hawswater) at but a small distance. Yet, though clustered together, every valley has its distinct and separate character; in some instances, as if they had been formed in studied contrast to each other, and in others with the united pleasing differences and resemblances of a sisterly rivalry. This concentration of interest gives to the country a decided superiority over the most attractive districts of Scotland and Wales, especially for the pedestrian traveller. In Scotland and Wales are found undoubtedly individual scenes, which, in their several kinds, cannot be excelled. But, in Scotland, particularly, what desolate and unimpressive tracts of country almost perpetually intervene! so that the traveller, when he reaches a spot deservedly of great celebrity, would find it difficult to determine how much of his pleasure is owing to excellence inherent in the landscape itself; and how much to an instantaneous recovery from an oppression left upon his spirits by the barrenness and desolation through which he has passed.

But, to proceed with our survey;—and, first, of the MOUNTAINS. Their *forms* are endlessly diversified, sweeping easily or boldly in simple majesty, abrupt and precipitous, or soft and elegant. In magnitude and grandeur they are individually inferior to the most celebrated of those in some other parts of this island; but, in the combinations which they make, towering above each other, or lifting themselves in ridges like the waves of a tumultuous sea, and

in the beauty and variety of their surfaces and their colours, they are surpassed by none.

The general *surface* of the mountains is turf, rendered rich and green by the moisture of the climate. Sometimes the turf, as in the neighbourhood of Newlands, is little broken, the whole covering being soft and downy pasturage. In other places rocks predominate; the soil is laid bare by torrents and burstings of water from the sides of the mountains in heavy rains; and occasionally their perpendicular sides are seamed by ravines (formed also by rains and torrents) which, meeting in angular points, entrench and scar over the surface with numerous figures like the letters W and Y.

The MOUNTAINS are composed of the stone by mineralogists termed schist, which, as you approach the plain country, gives place to lime-stone and free-stone; but schist being the substance of the mountains, the predominant *colour* of their *rocky* parts is bluish, or hoary gray—the general tint of the lichens with which the bare stone is encrusted. With this blue or grey colour is frequently intermixed a red tinge, proceeding from the iron that interveins the stone, and impregnates the soil. The iron is the principle of decomposition in these rocks; and hence, when they become pulverized, the elementary particles crumbling down overspread in many places the steep and almost precipitous sides of the mountains with an intermixture of colours, like the compound hues of a dove's neck. When, in the heat of advancing summer, the fresh green tint of the herbage has somewhat faded, it is again revived by the appearance of the fern profusely spread every where; and, upon this plant, more than upon any thing else, do the changes which the seasons make in the colouring of the mountains depend. About the first week in October, the rich green, which prevailed through the whole summer, is usually passed away. The brilliant and various colours of the fern are then in harmony with the autumnal woods; bright yellow or lemon colour, at the base of the mountains, melting gradually, through orange, to a dark russet brown towards the summits, where the plant being more exposed to the weather is in a more advanced state of decay. Neither heath nor furze are *generally* found upon the *sides* of these mountains, though in some places they are richly adorned by them. We may add, that the mountains are of height sufficient to have the surface towards the summits softened by distance, and to imbibe the finest aërial hues. In common also with other mountains, their apparent forms and

colours are perpetually changed by the clouds and vapours which float round them: the effect indeed of mist or haze, in a country of this character, is like that of magic. I have seen six or seven ridges rising above each other, all created in a moment by the vapours upon the side of a mountain, which, in its ordinary appearance, showed not a projecting point to furnish even a hint for such an operation.

I will take this opportunity of observing, that they, who have studied the appearances of nature, feel that the superiority, in point of visual interest, of mountainous over other countries—is more strikingly displayed in winter than in summer. This, as must be obvious, is partly owing to the *forms* of the mountains, which, of course, are not affected by the seasons; but also, in no small degree, to the greater variety that exists in their winter than their summer *colouring*. This variety is such, and so harmoniously preserved, that it leaves little cause of regret when the splendour of autumn is passed away. The oak-coppices, upon the sides of the mountains, retain russet leaves; the birch stands conspicuous with its silver stem and puce-coloured twigs; the hollies, with green leaves and scarlet berries, have come forth to view from among the deciduous trees, whose summer foliage had concealed them; the ivy is now plentifully apparent upon the stems and boughs of the trees, and among the woody rocks. In place of the uniform summer-green of the herbage and fern, many rich colours play into each other over the surface of the mountains; turf (the tints of which are interchangeably tawny-green, olive, and brown,) beds of withered fern, and grey rocks, being harmoniously blended together. The mosses and lichens are never so fresh and flourishing as in winter, if it be not a season of frost; and their minute beauties prodigally adorn the fore-ground. Wherever we turn, we find these productions of nature, to which winter is rather favourable than unkindly, scattered over the walls, banks of earth, rocks, and stones, and upon the trunks of trees, with the intermixture of several species of small fern, now green and fresh; and, to the observing passenger, their forms and colours are a source of inexhaustible admiration. Add to this the hoar-frost and snow, with all the varieties they create, and which volumes would not be sufficient to describe. I will content myself with one instance of the colouring produced by snow, which may not be uninteresting to painters. It is extracted from the memorandum-book of a friend; and for its accuracy I can speak, having been an eye-witness of the appearance. “I observed,” says

he, "the beautiful effect of the drifted snow upon the mountains, and the perfect *tone* of colour. From the top of the mountains downwards a rich olive was produced by the powdery snow and the grass, which olive was warmed with a little brown, and in this way harmoniously combined, by insensible gradations, with the white. The drifting took away the monotony of snow; and the whole vale of Grasmere, seen from the terrace walk in Easedale, was as varied, perhaps more so, than even in the pomp of autumn. In the distance was Loughrigg-Fell, the basin-wall of the lake: this, from the summit downward, was a rich orange-olive; then the lake of a bright olive-green, nearly the same tint as the snow-powdered mountain tops and high slopes in Easedale; and lastly, the church with its firs forming the centre of the view. Next to the church with its firs, came nine distinguishable hills, six of them with woody sides turned towards us, all of them oak-copses with their bright red leaves and snow-powdered twigs; these hills—so variously situated to each other, and to the view in general, so variously powdered, some only enough to give the herbage a rich brown tint, one intensely white and lighting up all the others—were not yet so placed, as in the most inobtrusive manner to harmonise by contrast with a perfect naked, snowless bleak summit in the far distance."

Having spoken of the forms, surface, and colour of the mountains, let us descend into the VALLEYS. Though these have been represented under the general image of the spokes of a wheel, they are, for the most part, winding; the windings of many being abrupt and intricate. And, it may be observed, that, in one circumstance, the general shape of them all has been determined by that primitive conformation through which so many became receptacles of lakes. For they are not formed, as are most of the celebrated Welsh valleys, by an approximation of the sloping bases of the opposite mountains towards each other, leaving little more between than a channel for the passage of a hasty river; but the bottom of these valleys is, for the most part, a spacious and gently declining area, apparently level as the floor of a temple, or the surface of a lake, and beautifully broken, in many cases, by rocks and hills, which rise up like islands from the plain. In such of the valleys as make many windings, these level areas open upon the traveller in succession, divided from each other sometimes by a mutual approximation of the hills, leaving only passage for a river, sometimes by correspondent windings, without such approximation; and sometimes by a

bold advance of one mountain towards that which is opposite to it. It may here be observed with propriety, that the several rocks and hills, which have been described as rising up like islands from the level area of the vale, have regulated the choice of the inhabitants in the situation of their dwellings. Where none of these are found, and the inclination of the ground is not sufficiently rapid easily to carry off the waters, (as in the higher part of Langdale, for instance,) the houses are not sprinkled over the middle part of the vales, but confined to their sides, being placed merely so far up the mountain as to protect them from the floods. But where these rocks and hills have been scattered over the plain of the vale, (as in Grasmere, Donnerdale, Eskdale, &c.) the beauty which they give to the scene is much heightened by a single cottage, or cluster of cottages, that will be almost always found under them or upon their sides; dryness and shelter having tempted the Dalesmen to fix their habitations there.

I shall now speak of the LAKES of this country. The form of the lake is most perfect when, like Derwent-water and some of the smaller lakes, it least resembles that of a river;—I mean, when being looked at from any given point where the whole may be seen at once, the width of it bears such proportion to the length, that, however the outline may be diversified by far-shooting bays, it never assumes the shape of a river, and is contemplated with that placid and quiet feeling which belongs peculiarly to the lake—as a body of still water under the influence of no current; reflecting therefore the clouds, the light, and all the imagery of the sky and surrounding hills; expressing also and making visible the changes of the atmosphere, and motions of the lightest breeze, and subject to agitation only from the winds—

———The visible scene
 Would enter unawares into his mind
 With all its solemn imagery, its rocks,
 Its woods, and that uncertain heaven received
 Into the bosom of the *steady* lake!

It must be noticed, as a favourable characteristic of the lakes of this country, that, though several of the largest, such as Winandermere, Ulswater, Hawswater, &c., do, when the whole length of them is commanded from an elevated point, lose somewhat of the peculiar form of the lake, and assume the resemblance of a magnificent river; yet, as their shape is winding, (particularly that of Ulswater

and Hawswater) when the view of the whole is obstructed by those barriers which determine the windings, and the spectator is confined to one reach, the appropriate feeling is revived; and one lake may thus in succession present to the eye the essential characteristic of many. But, though the forms of the large lakes have this advantage, it is nevertheless a circumstance favourable to the beauty of the country, that the largest of them are comparatively small; and that the same valley generally furnishes a succession of lakes, instead of being filled with one. The valleys in North Wales, as hath been observed, are not formed for the reception of lakes; those of Switzerland, Scotland, and this part of the north of England, are so formed; but, in Switzerland and Scotland, the proportion of diffused water is often too great, as at the lake of Geneva for instance, and in most of the Scotch lakes. No doubt it sounds magnificent and flatters the imagination to hear at a distance of expanses of water so many leagues in length and miles in width; and such ample room may be delightful to the fresh-water sailor scudding with a lively breeze amid the rapidly-shifting scenery. But, who ever travelled along the banks of Loch-Lomond, variegated as the lower part is by islands, without feeling that a speedier termination of the long vista of blank water would be acceptable; and without wishing for an interposition of green meadows, trees, and cottages, and a sparkling stream to run by his side? In fact, a notion of grandeur, as connected with magnitude, has seduced persons of taste into a general mistake upon this subject. It is much more desirable, for the purposes of pleasure, that lakes should be numerous, and small or middle-sized, than large, not only for communication by walks and rides, but for variety, and for recurrence of similar appearances. To illustrate this by one instance:—how pleasing is it to have a ready and frequent opportunity of watching, at the outlet of a lake, the stream pushing its way among the rocks in lively contrast with the stillness from which it has escaped; and how amusing to compare its noisy and turbulent motions with the gentle playfulness of the breezes, that may be starting up or wandering here and there over the faintly-rippled surface of the broad water! I may add, as a general remark, that, in lakes of great width, the shores cannot be distinctly seen at the same time, and therefore contribute little to mutual illustration and ornament; and, if, like the American and Asiatic lakes, the opposite shores are out of sight of each other, then unfortunately the traveller is reminded of a nobler object; he has the blankness of a

sea-prospect without the same grandeur and accompanying sense of power.

As the comparatively small size of the lakes in the North of England is favourable to the production of variegated landscape, their *boundary-line* also is for the most part gracefully or boldly indented. That uniformity which prevails in the primitive frame of the lower grounds among all chains or clusters of mountains where large bodies of still water are bedded, is broken by the *secondary* agents of nature, ever at work to supply the deficiencies of the mould in which things were originally cast. It need scarcely be observed that using the word, deficiencies, I do not speak with reference to those stronger emotions which a region of mountains is peculiarly fitted to excite. The bases of those huge barriers may run for a long space in straight lines, and these parallel to each other; the opposite sides of a profound vale may ascend as exact counterparts or in mutual reflection like the billows of a troubled sea; and the impression be, from its very simplicity, more awful and sublime. Sublimity is the result of Nature's first great dealings with the superficies of the earth; but the general tendency of her subsequent operations is towards the production of beauty, by a multiplicity of symmetrical parts uniting in a consistent whole. This is every where exemplified along the margin of these lakes. Masses of rock, that have been precipitated from the heights into the area of waters, lie frequently like stranded ships; or have acquired the compact structure of jutting piers; or project in little peninsulas crested with native wood. The smallest rivulet—one whose silent influx is scarcely noticeable in a season of dry weather so faint is the dimple made by it on the surface of the smooth lake—will be found to have been not useless in shaping, by its deposits of gravel and soil in time of flood, a curve that would not otherwise have existed. But the more powerful brooks, encroaching upon the level of the lake, have in course of time given birth to ample promontories, whose sweeping line often contrasts boldly with the longitudinal base of the steeps on the opposite shore; while their flat or gently-sloping surface never fails to introduce, into the midst of desolation and barrenness, the elements of fertility, even where the habitations of men may not happen to have been raised. These alluvial promontories, however, threaten in some places to bisect the waters which they have long adorned; and, in course of ages, they will cause some of the lakes to dwindle into numerous and insignificant pools; which, in their turn, will finally be filled up. But the man of taste will say, it

is an impertinent calculation that leads to such unwelcome conclusions;—let us rather be content with appearances as they are, and pursue in imagination the meandering shores, whether rugged steeps, admitting of no cultivation, descend into the water; or the shore is formed by gently-sloping lawns and rich woods, or by flat and fertile meadows stretching between the margin of the lake and the mountains. Among minuter recommendations will be noted with pleasure the curved rim of fine blue gravel thrown up by the waves, especially in bays exposed to the setting-in of strong winds; here and there are found, bordering the lake, groves, if I may so call them, of reeds and bulrushes; or plots of water-lilies lifting up their large circular leaves to the breeze, while the white flower is heaving upon the wave.

The ISLANDS are neither so numerous nor so beautiful as might be expected from the account I have given of the manner in which the level areas of the vales are so frequently diversified by rocks, hills, and hillocks, scattered over them; nor are they ornamented, as are several islands of the lakes in Scotland, by the remains of old castles or other places of defence, or of monastic edifices. There is however a beautiful cluster of islands on Winandermere; a pair pleasingly contrasted upon Rydal; nor must the solitary green island at Grasmere be forgotten. In the bosom of each of the lakes of Ennerdale and Devock-water is a single rock which, owing to its neighbourhood to the sea, is—

“The haunt of cormorants and sea-mews’ clang,”

a music well suited to the stern and wild character of the several scenes!

This part of the subject may be concluded with observing—that, from the multitude of brooks and torrents that fall into these lakes, and of internal springs by which they are fed, and which circulate through them like veins, they are truly living lakes, “*vivi lacus*,” and are thus discriminated from the stagnant and sullen pools frequent among mountains that have been formed by volcanoes, and from the shallow meres found in flat and fenny countries. The water is also pure and crystalline; so that, if it were not for the reflections of the incumbent mountains by which it is darkened, a delusion might be felt, by a person resting quietly in a boat on the bosom of Winandermere or Derwent-water, similar to that which Carver so beautifully describes when he was floating alone in the middle of the lake Erie or Ontario, and could almost have imagined

that his boat was suspended in an element as pure as air, or rather that the air and water were one.

Having spoken of Lakes I must not omit to mention, as a kindred feature of this country, those bodies of still water called TARNs. These are found in some of the valleys, and are very numerous upon the mountains. A Tarn, in a *Vale*, implies, for the most part, that the bed of the vale is not happily formed; that the water of the brooks can neither wholly escape, nor diffuse itself over a large area. Accordingly, in such situations, Tarns are often surrounded by a tract of boggy ground which has an unsightly appearance; but this is not always the case, and in the cultivated parts of the country, when the shores of the Tarn are determined, it differs only from the Lake in being smaller, and in belonging mostly to a smaller valley or circular recess. Of this class of miniature lakes Loughrigg Tarn, near Grasmere, is the most beautiful example. It has a margin of green firm meadows, of rocks, and rocky woods, a few reeds here, a little company of water-lilies there, with beds of gravel or stone beyond; a tiny stream issuing neither briskly nor sluggishly out of it; but its feeding rills, from the shortness of their course, so small as to be scarcely visible. Five or six cottages are reflected in its peaceful bosom; rocky and barren steeps rise up above the hanging enclosures; and the solemn pikes of Langdale overlook, from a distance, the low cultivated ridge of land that forms the northern boundary of this small, quiet, and fertile domain. The *mountain* Tarns can only be recommended to the notice of the inquisitive traveller who has time to spare. They are difficult of access and naked; yet some of them are, in their permanent forms, very grand; and there are accidents of things which would make the meanest of them interesting. At all events, one of these pools is an acceptable sight to the mountain wanderer, not merely as an incident that diversifies the prospect, but as forming in his mind a centre or conspicuous point to which objects, otherwise disconnected or unsubordinated, may be referred. Some few have a varied outline, with bold heath-clad promontories; and, as they mostly lie at the foot of a steep precipice, the water, where the sun is not shining upon it, appears black and sullen; and round the margin huge stones and masses of rock are scattered; some defying conjecture as to the means by which they came there, and others obviously fallen from on high—the contribution of ages! The sense, also, of some repulsive power strongly put forth—excited by the prospect of a body of pure water unattended with groves and

other cheerful rural images by which fresh water is usually accompanied, and unable to give any furtherance to the meagre vegetation around it—heightens the melancholy natural to such scenes. Nor is the feeling of solitude often more forcibly or more solemnly impressed than by the side of one of these mountain pools: though desolate and forbidding, it seems a distinct place to repair to; yet where the visitants must be rare, and there can be no disturbance. Water-fowl flock hither; and the lonely Angler may oftentimes here be seen; but the imagination, not content with this scanty allowance of society, is tempted to attribute a voluntary power to every change which takes place in such a spot, whether it be the breeze that wanders over the surface of the water, or the splendid lights of evening resting upon it in the midst of awful precipices.

There, sometimes does a leaping fish
Send through the tarn a lonely cheer;
The crags repeat the raven's croak
In symphony austere:
Thither the rainbow comes, the cloud,
And mists that spread the flying shroud,
And sunbeams, and the sounding blast,—

Though this country is, on one side, bounded by the sea, which combines beautifully, from some elevated points of view, with the inland scenery; yet the æstuaries cannot pretend to vie with those of Scotland and Wales:—the Lakes are such in the strict and usual sense of the word, being all of fresh water; nor have the Rivers, from the shortness of their course, time to acquire that body of water necessary to confer upon them much majesty. In fact, while they continue in the mountain and lake-country, they are rather large brooks than rivers. The water is perfectly pellucid, through which in many places are seen to a great depth their beds of rock or of blue gravel which give to the water itself an exquisitely cerulean colour: this is particularly striking in the rivers, Derwent and Duddon, which may be compared, such and so various are their beauties, to any two rivers of equal length of course in any country. The number of the torrents and smaller brooks is infinite, with their water-falls and water-breaks; and they need not here be described. I will only observe that, as many, even of the smallest of these rills, have either found, or made for themselves, recesses in the sides of the mountains or in the vales, they have tempted the primitive inhabitants to settle near them for shelter; and hence the retirement and seclusion by which these cottages are endeared to the eye of the man of sensibility.

The Woods consist chiefly of oak, ash, and birch, and here and there a species of elm, with underwood of hazel, the white and black thorn, and hollies; in moist places alders and willows abound; and yews among the rocks. Formerly the whole country must have been covered with wood to a great height up the mountains; and native Scotch Firs (as in the northern part of Scotland to this day) must have grown in great profusion. But no one of these old inhabitants of the country remains, or perhaps has done for some hundreds of years; beautiful traces however of the universal sylvan appearance the country formerly had, are yet seen, both in the native coppice-woods that remain, and have been protected by enclosures, and also in the forest-trees and hollies, which, though disappearing fast, are yet scattered both over the inclosed and uninclosed parts of the mountains. The same is expressed by the beauty and intricacy with which the fields and coppice-woods are often intermingled: the plough of the first settlers having followed naturally the veins of richer, dryer, or less stony soil; and thus it has shaped out an intermixture of wood and lawn with a grace and wildness which it would have been impossible for the hand of studied art to produce. Other trees have been introduced within these last fifty years, such as beeches, larches, limes, &c. and plantations of Scotch firs, seldom with advantage, and often with great injury to the appearance of the country; but the sycamore (which I believe was brought into this island from Germany, not more than two hundred years ago) has long been the favourite of the cottagers; and, with the Scotch fir, has been chosen to screen their dwellings; and is sometimes found in the fields whither the winds or waters may have carried its seeds.

The want most felt, however, is that of timber trees. There are few magnificent ones to be found near any of the lakes; and, unless greater care be taken, there will in a short time scarcely be left an ancient oak that would repay the cost of felling. The neighbourhood of Rydal, notwithstanding the havoc which has been made, is yet nobly distinguished. In the woods of Lowther, also, is found an almost matchless store of the grandest trees, and all the majesty and wildness of the native forest.

Among the smaller vegetable ornaments provided here by nature, must be reckoned the juniper, bilberry, and the broom-plant, with which the hills and woods abound; the Dutch myrtle in moist places; and the endless variety of brilliant flowers in the fields and meadows; which, if the agriculture of the country were more

carefully attended to, would disappear. Nor can I omit again to notice the lichens and mosses,—their profusion, beauty, and variety exceed those of any other country I have seen.

Thus far I have chiefly spoken of the features by which Nature has discriminated this country from others. I will now describe, in general terms, in what manner it is indebted to the hand of man. What I have to notice on this subject will emanate most easily and perspicuously from a description of the ancient and present inhabitants, their occupations, their condition of life, the distribution of landed property among them, and the tenure by which it is holden.

The reader will suffer me here to recall to his mind the shapes of the valleys and their position with respect to each other, and the forms and substance of the intervening mountains. He will people the valleys with lakes and rivers; the coves and sides of the mountains with pools and torrents; and will bound half of the circle which we have contemplated by the sands of the sea, or by the sea itself. He will conceive that, from the point upon which he before stood, he looks down upon this scene before the country had been penetrated by any inhabitants:—to vary his sensations and to break in upon their stillness, he will form to himself an image of the tides visiting and re-visiting the Friths, the main sea dashing against the bolder shore, the rivers pursuing their course to be lost in the mighty mass of waters. He may see or hear in fancy the winds sweeping over the lakes, or piping with a loud voice among the mountain peaks; and, lastly, may think of the primeval woods shedding and renewing their leaves with no human eye to notice, or human heart to regret or welcome the change. “When the first settlers entered this region (says an animated writer) they found it overspread with wood; forest trees, the fir, the oak, the ash, and the birch, had skirted the fells, tufted the hills, and shaded the valleys through centuries of silent solitude; the birds and beasts of prey reigned over the meeker species; and the *bellum inter omnia* maintained the balance of nature in the empire of beasts.”

Such was the state and appearance of this region when the aboriginal colonists of the Celtic tribes were first driven or drawn towards it, and became joint tenants with the wolf, the boar, the wild bull, the red deer, and the leigh, a gigantic species of deer which has been long extinct; while the inaccessible crags were occupied by the falcon, the raven, and the eagle. The inner parts were too secluded and of too little value to participate much of the

benefit of Roman manners; and though these conquerors encouraged the Britons to the improvement of their lands in the plain country of Furness and Cumberland, they seem to have had little connection with the mountains, except for military purposes, or in subservience to the profit they drew from the mines.

When the Romans retired from Great Britain, it is well known that these mountain fastnesses furnished a protection to some unsubdued Britons, long after the more accessible and more fertile districts had been seized by the Saxon or Danish invader. A few though distinct traces of Roman forts or camps, as at Ambleside, and upon Dunmallet, and two or three circles of rude stones attributed to the Druids, are the only vestiges that remain upon the surface of the country, of these ancient occupants; and, as the Saxons and Danes, who succeeded to the possession of the villages and hamlets which had been established by the Britons, seem at first to have confined themselves to the open country,—we may descend at once to times long posterior to the conquest by the Normans when their feudal polity was regularly established. We may easily conceive that these narrow dales and mountain sides, choaked up as they must have been with wood, lying out of the way of communication with other parts of the Island, and upon the edge of a hostile kingdom, could have little attraction for the high-born and powerful; especially as the more open parts of the country furnished positions for castles and houses of defence sufficient to repel any of those sudden attacks, which, in the then rude state of military knowledge, could be made upon them. Accordingly, the more retired regions (and, observe, it is to these I am now confining myself) must have been neglected or shunned even by the persons whose baronial or signiorial rights extended over them, and left, doubtless, partly as a place of refuge for outlaws and robbers, and partly granted out for the more settled habitation of a few vassals following the employment of shepherds or woodlanders. Hence these lakes and inner valleys are unadorned by any of the remains of ancient grandeur, castles, or monastic edifices, which are only found upon the skirts of this country, as Furness Abbey, Calder Abbey, the Priory of Lannercost, Gleaston Castle,—long ago a residence of the Flemings,—and the numerous ancient castles of the Cliffords and the Dacres. On the southern side of these mountains, (especially in that part known by the name of Furness Fells, which is more remote from the borders,) the state of society would necessarily be more settled; though it was fashioned not a little, with

the rest of the country, by its neighbourhood to a hostile kingdom. We will therefore give a sketch of the œconomy of the Abbots in the distribution of lands among their tenants, as similar plans were doubtless adopted by other Lords, and as the consequences have affected the face of the country materially to the present day, being in fact one of the principal causes which give it such a striking superiority, in beauty and interest, over all other parts of the island.

“When the Abbots of Furness,” says an author before cited, “enfranchised their villains, and raised them to the dignity of customary tenants, the lands, which they had cultivated for their lord, were divided into whole tenements; each of which, besides the customary annual rent, was charged with the obligation of having in readiness a man completely armed for the king’s service on the borders, or elsewhere: each of these whole tenements was again subdivided into four equal parts; each villain had one; and the party tenant contributed his share to the support of the man at arms, and of other burdens. These divisions were not properly distinguished; the land remained mixed; each tenant had a share through all the arable and meadow-land, and common of pasture over all the wastes. These sub-tenements were judged sufficient for the support of so many families; and no further division was permitted. These divisions and subdivisions were convenient at the time for which they were calculated; the land, so parcelled out, was, of necessity, more attended to; and the industry greater, when more persons were to be supported by the produce of it. The frontier of the kingdom, within which Furness was considered, was in a constant state of attack and defence; more hands, therefore, were necessary to guard the coast, to repel an invasion from Scotland, or make reprisals on the hostile neighbour. The dividing the lands in such manner as has been shown, increased the number of inhabitants, and kept them at home till called for; and, the land being mixed, and the several tenants united in equipping the plough, the absence of the fourth man was no prejudice to the cultivation of his land, which was committed to the care of three.

“While the villains of Low Furness were thus distributed over the land, and employed in agriculture; those of High Furness were charged with the care of flocks and herds, to protect them from the wolves which lurked in the thickets, and in winter to browse them with the tender sprouts of hollies and ash. This custom was not till lately discontinued in High Furness; and holly-trees were carefully

preserved for that purpose when all other wood was cleared off; large tracts of common being so covered with these trees, as to have the appearance of a forest of hollies. At the Shepherd's call, the flocks surrounded the holly-bush, and received the croppings at his hand, which they greedily nibbled up, bleating for more. The Abbots of Furness enfranchised these pastoral vassals, and permitted them to enclose *quillets* to their houses, for which they paid encroachment rent."—West's *Antiquities of Furness*.

However desirable, for the purposes of defence, a numerous population might be, it was not possible to make at once the same numerous allotments among the untilled valleys, and upon the sides of the mountains, as had been made in the cultivated plains. The enfranchised shepherd, or woodlander, having chosen there his place of residence, builds it of sods, or of the mountain-stone, and, with the permission of his lord, encloses, like Robinson Crusoe, a small croft or two immediately at his door for such animals chiefly as he wishes to protect. Others are happy to imitate his example, and avail themselves of the same privileges; and thus a population, mainly of Danish or Norse origin, as the dialect indicates, crept on towards the more secluded parts of the valleys. Chapels, daughters of some distant mother church, are first erected in the more open and fertile vales, as those of Bowness and Grasmere, offsets of Kendal; which again, after a period, as the settled population increases, become mother churches to smaller edifices, scattered, at length, in almost every dale throughout the country. The enclosures, formed by the tenantry, are for a long time confined to the home-steads; and the arable and meadow land of the vales is possessed in common field; the several portions being marked out by stones, bushes, or trees; which portions, where the custom has survived, to this day are called *dales*, from the word *deylen*, to distribute; but while the valley was thus lying open, enclosures seem to have taken place upon the sides of the mountains; because the land there was not intermixed, and was of little comparative value; and, therefore, small opposition would be made to its being appropriated by those to whose habitations it was contiguous. Hence the singular appearance which the sides of many of these mountains exhibit, intersected, as they are, almost to their summit, with stone walls, of which the fences are always formed. When first erected, they must have little disfigured the face of the country; as part of the lines would every where be hidden by the quantity of native wood then remaining; and the lines would also

be broken (as they still are) by the rocks which interrupt and vary their course. In the meadows, and in those parts of the lower grounds where the soil has not been sufficiently drained, and could not afford a stable foundation, there, when the increasing value of land, and the inconvenience suffered from intermixed plots of ground in common field, had induced each inhabitant to inclose his own, they were compelled to make the fences of alders, willows, and other trees. These, where the native wood had disappeared, have frequently enriched the valleys with a sylvan appearance; while the intricate intermixture of property has given to the fences a graceful irregularity, which, where large properties are prevalent, and larger capitals employed in agriculture, is unknown. This sylvan appearance is still further heightened by the number of ash-trees which have been planted in rows along the quick fences, and along the walls, for the purpose of browsing cattle at the approach of winter. The branches are lopped off and strewed upon the pastures; and, when the cattle have stripped them of the leaves, they are used for repairing hedges, or for fuel.

We have thus seen a numerous body of Dalesmen creeping into possession of their home-steads, their little crofts, their mountain-enclosures; and, finally, the whole vale is visibly divided; except, perhaps, here and there some marshy ground, which, till fully drained, would not repay the trouble of enclosing. But these last partitions do not seem to have been general, till long after the pacification of the Borders, by the union of the two crowns; when the cause, which had first determined the distribution of land into such small parcels, had not only ceased,—but likewise a general improvement had taken place in the country, with a correspondent rise in the value of its produce. From the time of the union, it is certain that this species of feudal population would rapidly diminish. That it was formerly much more numerous than it is at present, is evident from the multitude of tenements (I do not mean houses, but small divisions of land,) which belonged formerly each to its several proprietor, and for which separate fines are paid to the manorial lord at this day. These are often in the proportion of four to one, of the present occupants. “Sir Launcelot Threlkeld, who lived in the reign of Henry VII. was wont to say, he had three noble houses, one for pleasure, Crosby, in Westmoreland, where he had a park full of deer; one for profit and warmth, wherein to reside in winter, namely, Yanwith, nigh Penrith; and the third, Threlkeld (on the edge of the vale of Keswick) well stocked with

tenants to go with him to the wars." But, as I have said, from the union of the two crowns, this numerous vassalage (their services not being wanted) would rapidly diminish; various tenements would be united in one possessor; and the aboriginal houses, probably little better than hovels, like the kraels of savages, or the huts of the Highlanders of Scotland, would many of them fall into decay, and wholly disappear, while the place of others was supplied by substantial and comfortable buildings, a majority of which remain to this day scattered over the valleys, and are in many the only dwellings found in them.

From the time of the erection of these houses, till within the last fifty years, the state of society, though no doubt slowly and gradually improving, underwent no material change. Corn was grown in these vales (through which no carriage-road had been made) sufficient upon each estate to furnish bread for each family, and no more: notwithstanding the union of several tenements, the possessions of each inhabitant still being small, in the same field was seen an intermixture of different crops; and the plough was interrupted by little rocks, mostly overgrown with wood, or by spongy places, which the tillers of the soil had neither leisure nor capital to convert into firm land. The storms and moisture of the climate induced them to sprinkle their upland property with out-houses of native stone, as places of shelter for their sheep, where, in tempestuous weather, food was distributed to them. Every family spun from its own flock the wool with which it was clothed; a weaver was here and there found among them; and the rest of their wants were supplied by the produce of the yarn, which they carded and spun in their own houses, and carried to market, either under their arms, or more frequently on pack-horses, a small train taking their way weekly down the valley or over the mountains to the most commodious town. They had, as I have said, their rural chapel, and of course their minister, in clothing or in manner of life, in no respect differing from themselves, except on the Sabbath-day; this was the sole distinguished individual among them; every thing else, person and possession, exhibited a perfect equality, a community of shepherds and agriculturists, proprietors, for the most part, of the lands which they occupied and cultivated.

While the process above detailed was going on, the native forest must have been every where receding; but trees were planted for the sustenance of the flocks in winter,—such was then the rude state of agriculture; and, for the same cause, it was

necessary that care should be taken of some part of the growth of the native forest. Accordingly, in Queen Elizabeth's time, this was so strongly felt, that a petition was made to the Crown, praying, "that the Blomaries in high Furness might be abolished, on account of the quantity of wood which was consumed in them for the use of the mines, to the great detriment of the cattle." But this same cause, about a hundred years after, produced effects directly contrary to those which had been deprecated. The re-establishment, at that period, of furnaces upon a large scale, made it the interest of the people to convert the steeper and more stony of the enclosures, sprinkled over with remains of the native forest, into close woods, which, when cattle and sheep were excluded, rapidly sowed and thickened themselves. I have already directed the reader's attention to the cause by which tufts of wood, pasturage, meadow, and arable land, with its various produce, are intricately intermingled in the same field, and he will now see, in like manner, how enclosures entirely of wood, and those of cultivated ground, are blended all over the country under a law of similar wildness.

An historic detail has thus been given of the manner in which the hand of man has acted upon the surface of the inner regions of this mountainous country, as incorporated with and subservient to the powers and processes of nature. We will now take a view of the same agency acting, within narrower bounds, for the production of the few works of art and accommodations of life which, in so simple a state of society, could be necessary. These are merely habitations of man and coverts for beasts, roads and bridges, and places of worship.

And to begin with the COTTAGES. They are scattered over the valleys, and under the hill sides, and on the rocks; and, even to this day, in the more retired dales, without any intrusion of more assuming buildings.

Clustered like stars some few, but single most,
And lurking dimly in their shy retreats,
Or glancing on each other cheerful looks,
Like separated stars with clouds between. MS.

The dwelling-houses, and contiguous outhouses, are, in many instances, of the colour of the native rock, out of which they have been built; but, frequently the dwelling-house has been distinguished from the barn and byer by roughcast and white wash, which, as the inhabitants are not hasty in renewing it, in a few years acquires, by the influence of weather, a tint at once sober and

variegated. As these houses have been from father to son inhabited by persons engaged in the same occupations, yet necessarily with changes in their circumstances, they have received additions and accommodations adapted to the needs of each successive occupant, who, being for the most part proprietor, was at liberty to follow his own fancy; so that these humble dwellings remind the contemplative spectator of a production of nature, and may (using a strong expression) rather be said to have grown than to have been erected;—to have risen by an instinct of their own out of the native rock! so little is there in them of formality; such is their wildness and beauty. Among the numerous recesses and projections in the walls and in the different stages of their roofs, are seen the boldest and most harmonious effects of contrasted sunshine and shadow. It is a favourable circumstance, that the strong winds, which sweep down the valleys, induced the inhabitants, at a time when the materials for building were easily procured, to furnish many of these dwellings with substantial porches; and such as have not this defence, are seldom unprovided with a projection of two large slates over their thresholds. Nor will the singular beauty of the chimneys escape the eye of the attentive traveller. Sometimes a low chimney, almost upon a level with the roof, is overlaid with a slate, supported upon four slender pillars, to prevent the wind from driving the smoke down the chimney. Others are of a quadrangular shape, rising one or two feet above the roof; which low square is often surmounted by a tall cylinder, giving to the cottage chimney the most beautiful shape in which it is ever seen. Nor will it be too fanciful or refined to remark, that there is a pleasing harmony between a tall chimney of this circular form, and the living column of smoke, through the still air ascending from it. These dwellings, as has been said, are built of rough unhewn stone; and they are roofed with slates, which were rudely taken from the quarry before the present art of splitting them was understood, and are therefore rough and uneven in their surfaces, so that both the coverings and sides of the houses have furnished places of rest for the seeds of lichens, mosses, ferns, and flowers. Hence buildings, which, in their very form call to mind the processes of nature, do thus, clothed with this vegetable garb, appear to be received into the bosom of the living principle of things, as it acts and exists among the woods and fields; and, by their colour and their shape, affectingly direct the thoughts to that tranquil course of nature and simplicity, along which the humble-minded inhabitants

have through so many generations been led. Add the little garden with its shed for bee-hives, its small beds of pot-herbs, and its borders and patches of flowers for Sunday posies, with sometimes a choice few too much prized to be plucked; an orchard of proportioned size; a cheese-press, often supported by some tree near the door; a cluster of embowering sycamores for summer shade; with a tall Scotch fir, through which the winds sing when other trees are leafless; the little rill or household spout murmuring in all seasons;—combine these incidents and images together, and you have the representative idea of a mountain-cottage in this country so beautifully formed in itself, and so richly adorned by the hand of nature.

Till within the last fifty years there was no communication between any of these vales by carriage-roads; all bulky articles were transported on pack-horses. Owing, however, to the population not being concentrated in villages but scattered, the valleys themselves were intersected as now by innumerable lanes and pathways leading from house to house and from field to field. These lanes, where they are fenced by stone walls, are mostly bordered with ashes, hazels, wild roses, and beds of tall fern, at their base; while the walls themselves if old are overspread with mosses, small ferns, wild strawberries, the geranium, and lichens; and if the wall happen to rest against a bank of earth, it is sometimes almost wholly concealed by a rich facing of stone-fern. It is a great advantage to a traveller or resident, that these numerous lanes and paths, if he be a zealous admirer of nature, will introduce him, nay, will lead him on into all the recesses of the country, so that the hidden treasures of its landscapes will by an ever-ready guide be laid open to his eyes.

Likewise to the smallness of the several properties is owing the great number of bridges over the brooks and torrents, and the daring and graceful neglect of danger or accommodation with which so many of them are constructed, the rudeness of the forms of some, and their endless variety. But, when I speak of this rudeness, I must at the same time add that many of these structures are in themselves models of elegance, as if they had been formed upon principles of the most thoughtful architecture. It is to be regretted that these monuments of the skill of our ancestors, and of that happy instinct by which consummate beauty was produced, are disappearing fast; but sufficient specimens remain to give a high gratification to the man of genuine taste. Such travellers as may

not be accustomed to pay attention to these things, will excuse me if I point out the proportion between the span and elevation of the arch, the lightness of the parapet, and the graceful manner in which its curve follows faithfully that of the arch.

Upon this subject I have nothing further to notice, except the places of worship, which have mostly a little school-house adjoining. The architecture of these churches and chapels, where they have not been recently rebuilt or modernised, is of a style not less appropriate and admirable than that of the dwelling-houses and other structures. How sacred the spirit by which our forefathers were directed! The *religio loci* is no where outraged by these unstinted, yet unpretending, works of human hands. They exhibit generally a well-proportioned oblong with a suitable porch, in some instances a steeple tower, and in others nothing more than a small belfry in which one or two bells hang visibly.—But these objects, though pleasing in their forms, must necessarily, more than others in rural scenery, derive their interest from the sentiments of piety and reverence for the modest virtues and simple manners of humble life with which they may be contemplated. A man must be very insensible who would not be touched with pleasure at the sight of the chapel of Buttermere, so strikingly expressing by its diminutive size how small must be the congregation there assembled, as it were, like one family; and proclaiming at the same time to the passenger, in connection with the surrounding mountains, the depth of that seclusion in which the people live that has rendered necessary the building of a separate place of worship for so few. A Patriot, calling to mind the images of the stately fabrics of Canterbury, York, or Westminster, will find a heart-felt satisfaction in presence of this lowly pile, as a monument of the wise institutions of our country, and as evidence of the all-pervading and paternal care of that venerable Establishment of which it is perhaps the humblest daughter.—The edifice is scarcely larger than many of the single stones or fragments of rock which are scattered near it.

We have thus far confined our observations on this division of the subject to that part of these Dales which runs up far into the mountains. In addition to such objects as have been hitherto described, it may be mentioned that, as we descend towards the open part of the Vales, we meet with the remains of ancient Parks, and with old Mansions of more stately architecture; and it may be observed that to these circumstances the country owes whatever ornament it retains of majestic and full-grown timber, as the

remains of the park of the ancient family of the Ratcliffs at Derwent-water, Gowbray-park, and the venerable woods of Rydal. Through the open parts of the vales are scattered, with more spacious domains attached to them, houses of a middle rank, between the pastoral cottage and the old hall-residence of the more wealthy *Estatesman*.

Thus has been given a faithful description, the minuteness of which the reader will pardon, of the face of this country as it was, and had been through centuries, till within the last fifty years. Towards the head of these Dales was found a perfect Republic of Shepherds and Agriculturalists, among whom the plough of each man was confined to the maintenance of his own family, or to the occasional accommodation of his neighbour. Two or three cows furnished each family with milk and cheese. The Chapel was the only edifice that presided over these dwellings, the supreme head of this pure Commonwealth; the members of which existed in the midst of a powerful empire, like an ideal society or an organised community, whose constitution had been imposed and regulated by the mountains which protected it. Neither Knight, nor Esquire, nor high-born Nobleman, was here; but many of these humble sons of the hills had a consciousness that the land, which they walked over and tilled, had for more than five hundred years been possessed by men of their name and blood;—and venerable was the transition, when a curious traveller, descending from the heart of the mountains, had come to some ancient manorial residence in the more open parts of the Vales, which, through the rights attached to its proprietor, connected the almost visionary mountain Republic he had been contemplating with the substantial frame of society as existing in the laws and constitution of a mighty empire.

Such, as I have said, was the appearance of things till within these last fifty years. A practice, by a strange abuse of terms denominated Ornamental Gardening, was at that time becoming prevalent over England. In union with an admiration of this art and in some instances in opposition to it, had been generated a relish for select parts of natural scenery; and Travellers instead of confining their observations to Towns, Manufactories, or Mines, began (a thing till then unheard of) to wander over the Island in search of sequestered spots distinguished, as they might accidentally have learned, for the sublimity or beauty of the forms of Nature there to be seen. —Dr. Brown, the celebrated Author of the *Estimate of the Manners and Principles of the Times*, published a letter to a

Friend in which the attractions of the Vale of Keswick were delineated with a powerful pencil, and the feeling of a genuine Enthusiast. Gray the Poet followed; he died soon after his forlorn and melancholy pilgrimage to the Vale of Keswick, and the record left behind him of what he had seen and felt in this journey excited that pensive interest with which the human mind is ever disposed to listen to the farewell words of a Man of genius. The journal of Gray feelingly showed how the gloom of ill health and low spirits had been irradiated by objects, which the Author's powers of mind enabled him to describe with distinctness and unaffected simplicity. Every reader of this journal must have been impressed with the words that conclude his notice of the Vale of Grasmere—"Not a single red tile, no flaring gentleman's house or garden-wall, breaks in upon the repose of this little unsuspected paradise; but all is peace, rusticity, and happy poverty in its neatest and most becoming attire."

What is here so justly said of Grasmere applied almost equally to all its sister Vales. It was well for the undisturbed pleasure of the Poet that he had no forebodings of the change which was soon to take place; and it might have been hoped that these words, indicating how much the charm of what *was*, depended upon what *was not*, would of themselves have preserved the ancient franchises of this and other kindred mountain retirements from trespass; or, (shall I dare to say?) would have secured scenes so consecrated from profanation. The lakes had now become celebrated; visitors flocked hither from all parts of England; the fancies of some were smitten so deeply, that they became settlers; and the Islands of Derwent-water and Winandermere, as they offered the strongest temptation, were the first places seized upon, and were instantly defaced by the intrusion.

The venerable wood that had grown for centuries round the small house called St. Herbert's Hermitage, had indeed some years before been felled by its native proprietor, and the whole island planted anew with Scotch firs left to spindle up by each other's side—a melancholy phalanx, defying the power of the winds, and disregarding the regret of the spectator, who might otherwise have cheated himself into a belief, that some of the decayed remains of those oaks, the place of which is in this manner usurped, had been planted by the Hermit's own hand. Comparatively, however, this sainted spot suffered little injury. The Hind's Cottage upon Vicar's island, in the same lake, with its embowering sycamores

and cattle-shed, disappeared, at the bidding of an alien improver, from the corner where they had stood; and right in the middle, and upon the precise point of the island's highest elevation, rose a tall square habitation, with four sides exposed, like an observatory, or a warren-house reared upon an eminence for the detection of depredators, or, like the temple of Æolus, where all the winds pay him obeisance. Round this novel structure, but at a respectful distance, platoons of firs were stationed, as if to protect their commander when weather and time should somewhat have shattered his strength. Within the narrow limits of this island were typified also the state and strength of a kingdom, and its religion as it had been and was,—for neither was the druidical circle uncreated, nor the church of the present establishment; nor the stately pier, emblem of commerce and navigation; nor the fort, to deal out thunder upon the approaching invader. The taste of a succeeding proprietor rectified the mistakes as far as was practicable, and has ridded the spot of its puerilities. The church, after having been docked of its steeple, is applied, both ostensibly and really, to the purpose for which the body of the pile was actually erected, namely, a boat-house; the fort is demolished, and, without indignation on the part of the spirits of the ancient Druids who officiated at the circle upon the opposite hill, the mimic arrangement of stones, with its *sanctum sanctorum*, has been swept away.

The present instance has been singled out, extravagant as it is, because, unquestionably, this beautiful country has, in numerous other places, suffered from the same spirit, though not clothed exactly in the same form, nor active in an equal degree. It will be sufficient here to utter a regret for the changes that have been made upon the principal Island at Winandermere, and in its neighbourhood. What could be more unfortunate than the taste that suggested the paring of the shores, and surrounding with an embankment this spot of ground, the natural shape of which was so beautiful! An artificial appearance has thus been given to the whole, while infinite varieties of minute beauty have been destroyed. Could not the margin of this noble island be given back to nature? Winds and waves work with a careless and graceful hand; and, should they in some places carry away a portion of the soil, the trifling loss would be amply compensated by the additional spirit, dignity, and loveliness, which these agents and the other powers of nature would soon communicate to what was left behind. As to the larch-plantations upon the main shore,—they

who remember the original appearance of the rocky steeps scattered over with native hollies and ash-trees, will be prepared to agree with what I shall have to say hereafter upon plantations in general.

But, in truth, no one can now travel through the more frequented tracts, without being offended at almost every turn by an introduction of discordant objects, disturbing that peaceful harmony of form and colour which had been through a long lapse of ages most happily preserved.

All gross transgressions of this kind originate, doubtless, in a feeling natural and honourable to the human mind, viz. the pleasure which it receives from distinct ideas, and from the perception of order, regularity, and contrivance. Now, unpractised minds receive these impressions only from objects that are divided from each other by strong lines of demarcation; hence the delight with which such minds are smitten by formality and harsh contrast. But I would beg of those who are eager to create the means of such gratification, first carefully to study what already exists; and they will find, in a country so lavishly gifted by nature, an abundant variety of forms marked out with a precision that will satisfy their desires. Moreover, a new habit of pleasure will be formed opposite to this, arising out of the perception of the fine gradations by which in nature one thing passes away into another, and the boundaries that constitute individuality, disappear in one instance, only to be revived elsewhere under a more alluring form. The hill of Dunmallet, at the foot of Ulswater, was once divided into different portions, by avenues of fir-trees, with a green and almost perpendicular lane descending down the steep hill through each avenue;—contrast this quaint appearance with the image of the same hill overgrown with self-planted wood,—each tree springing up in the situation best suited to its kind, and with that shape which the situation constrained or suffered it to take. What endless melting and playing into each other of forms and colours does the one offer to a mind at once attentive and active; and how insipid and lifeless, compared with it, appear those parts of the former exhibition with which a child, a peasant perhaps, or a citizen unfamiliar with natural imagery, would have been most delighted!

I cannot, however, omit observing, that the disfigurement which this country has undergone, has not proceeded wholly from those common feelings of human nature which have been referred to as the primary sources of bad taste in rural scenery; another

cause must be added, which has chiefly shown itself in its effect upon buildings. I mean a warping of the natural mind occasioned by a consciousness that, this country being an object of general admiration, every new house would be looked at and commented upon either for approbation or censure. Hence all the deformity and ungracefulness that ever pursue the steps of constraint or affectation. Men, who in Leicestershire or Northamptonshire would probably have built a modest dwelling like those of their sensible neighbours, have been turned out of their course; and, acting a part, no wonder if, having had little experience, they act it ill. The craving for prospect also, which is immoderate, particularly in new settlers, has rendered it impossible that buildings, whatever might have been their architecture, should in most instances be ornamental to the landscape; rising as they do from the summits of naked hills in staring contrast to the snugness and privacy of the ancient houses.

No man is to be condemned for a desire to decorate his residence and possessions; feeling a disposition to applaud such an endeavour, I would show how the end may be best attained. The rule is simple; with respect to grounds—work, where you can, in the spirit of nature with an invisible hand of art. Planting, and a removal of wood, may thus and thus only be carried on with good effect; and the like may be said of building, if Antiquity, who may be styled the co-partner and sister of Nature, be not denied the respect to which she is entitled. I have already spoken of the beautiful forms of the ancient mansions of this country, and of the happy manner in which they harmonise with the forms of nature. Why cannot these be taken as a model, and modern internal convenience be confined within their external grace and dignity? Expense to be avoided, or difficulties to be overcome, may prevent a close adherence to this model; still, however, it might be followed to a certain degree in the style of architecture and in the choice of situation, if the thirst for prospect were mitigated by those considerations of comfort, shelter, and convenience, which used to be chiefly sought after. But, should an aversion to old fashions unfortunately exist, accompanied with a desire to transplant into the cold and stormy North, the elegancies of a villa formed upon a model taken from countries with a milder climate, I will adduce a passage from an English poet, the divine Spenser, which will show in what manner such a plan may be realised without injury to the native beauty of these scenes.

“Into that forest farre they thence him led,
Where was their dwelling in a pleasant glade
With MOUNTAINS round about environed,
And MIGHTY WOODS which did the valley shade,
And like a stately theatre it made,
Spreading itself into a spacious plaine;
And in the midst a little river plaide
Emongst the pumy stones which seem'd to 'plaine
With gentle murmure that his course they did restraine.

Beside the same a dainty place there lay,
Planted with mirtle trees and laurels green,
In which the birds sang many a lovely lay
Of God's high praise, and of their sweet loves teene,
As it an earthly paradise had beene;
In whose *enclosed shadow* there was pight
A fair pavilion, *scarcely to be seen*,
The which was all within most richly dight,
That greatest princes living it mote well delight.”

Houses or mansions suited to a mountainous region, should be “not obvious, not obtrusive, but retired;” and the reasons for this rule, though they have been little adverted to, are evident. Mountainous countries, more frequently and forcibly than others, remind us of the power of the elements, as manifested in winds, snows, and torrents, and accordingly make the notion of exposure very unpleasing; while shelter and comfort are in proportion necessary and acceptable. Far-winding valleys difficult of access, and the feelings of simplicity habitually connected with mountain retirements, prompt us to turn from ostentation as a thing there eminently unnatural and out of place. A mansion, amid such scenes, can never have sufficient dignity or interest to become principal in the landscape, and render the mountains, lakes, or torrents by which it may be surrounded, a subordinate part of the view. It is, I grant, easy to conceive, that an ancient castellated building, hanging over a precipice or raised upon an island, or the peninsula of a lake, like that of Kilchurn Castle, upon Loch Awe, may not want, whether deserted or inhabited, sufficient majesty to preside for a moment in the spectator's thoughts over the high mountains among which it is embosomed; but its titles are from antiquity—a power readily submitted to upon occasion as the vicegerent of Nature: it is respected, as having owed its existence to the necessities of things, as a monument of security in times of disturbance and danger long passed-away,—as a record of the pomp and violence of

passion, and a symbol of the wisdom of law;—it bears a countenance of authority, which is not impaired by decay.

“Child of loud-throated war, the mountain-stream
Roars in thy hearing; but thy hour of rest
Is come, and thou art silent in thy age!”

MS.

To such honours a modern edifice can lay no claim; and the puny efforts of elegance appear contemptible, when, in such situations, they are obtruded in rivalry with the sublimities of Nature. But, towards the verge of a district like this of which we are treating, where the mountains subside into hills of moderate elevation, or in an undulating or flat country, a gentleman's mansion may, with propriety, become a principal feature in the landscape; and, itself being a work of art, works and traces of artificial ornament may, without censure, be extended around it, as they will be referred to the common centre, the house; the right of which to impress within certain limits a character of obvious ornament will not be denied, where no commanding forms of nature dispute it, or set it aside. Now, to a want of the perception of this difference, and to the causes before assigned, may chiefly be attributed the disfigurement which the Country of the Lakes has undergone, from persons who may have built, demolished, and planted, with full confidence, that every change and addition was or would become an improvement.

The principle that ought to determine the position, apparent size, and architecture of a house, viz. that it should be so constructed, and (if large) so much of it hidden, as to admit of its being gently incorporated into the scenery of nature—should also determine its colour. Sir Joshua Reynolds used to say, “if you would fix upon the best colour for your house, turn up a stone, or pluck up a handful of grass by the roots, and see what is the colour of the soil where the house is to stand, and let that be your choice.” Of course, this precept, given in conversation, could not have been meant to be taken literally. For example, in Low Furness, where the soil, from its strong impregnation with iron, is universally of a deep red, if this rule were strictly followed, the house also must be of a glaring red; in other places it must be of a sullen black; which would only be adding annoyance to annoyance. The rule, however, as a general guide, is good; and, in agricultural districts, where large tracts of soil are laid bare by the plough, particularly if (the face of the country being undulating) they are held up to view, this rule, though not to be implicitly adhered to, should never be lost sight

of;—the colour of the house ought, if possible, to have a cast or shade of the colour of the soil. The principle is, that the house must harmonise with the surrounding landscape: accordingly, in mountainous countries, with still more confidence may it be said, “look at the rocks and those parts of the mountains where the soil is visible, and they will furnish a safe direction.” Nevertheless, it will often happen that the rocks may bear so large a proportion to the rest of the landscape, and may be of such a tone of colour, that the rule may not admit even here of being implicitly followed. For instance, the chief defect in the colouring of the Country of the Lakes, (which is most strongly felt in the summer season) is an over-prevalence of a bluish tint, which the green of the herbage, the fern, and the woods, does not sufficiently counteract. If a house, therefore, should stand where this defect prevails, I have no hesitation in saying, that the colour of the neighbouring rocks would not be the best that could be chosen. A tint ought to be introduced approaching nearer to those which, in the technical language of painters, are called *warm*: this, if happily selected, would not disturb but would animate the landscape. How often do we see this exemplified upon a small scale by the native cottages, in cases where the glare of white-wash has been subdued by time and enriched by weather-stains! No harshness is then seen; but one of these cottages, thus coloured, will often form a central point to a landscape by which the whole shall be connected, and an influence of pleasure diffused over all the objects that compose the picture. But where the cold blue tint of the rocks is enriched by the iron tinge, the colour cannot be too closely imitated; and it will be produced of itself by the stones hewn from the adjoining quarry, and by the mortar, which may be tempered with the most gravelly part of the soil. The pure blue gravel, from the bed of the river, is, however, more suitable to the mason’s purpose, who will probably insist also that the house must be covered with rough-cast, otherwise it cannot be kept dry; if this advice be taken, the builder of taste will set about contriving such means as may enable him to come the nearest to the effect aimed at.

The supposed necessity of rough-cast to keep out rain in houses not built of hewn stone or brick, has tended greatly to injure English landscape, and the neighbourhood of these Lakes especially, by furnishing such apt occasion for whitening buildings. That white should be a favourite colour for rural residences is natural for many reasons. The mere aspect of cleanliness and neatness thus

given, not only to an individual house, but, where the practice is general, to the whole face of the country, produces moral associations so powerful, that, in the minds of many, they take place of every other relating to such objects. But what has already been said upon the subject of cottages, must have convinced men of feeling and imagination, that a human habitation of the humblest class may be rendered more deeply interesting to the affections, and far more pleasing to the eye, by other influences than a sprightly tone of colour spread over its outside. I do not, however, mean to deny, that a small white building, embowered in trees, may, in some situations, be a delightful and animating object—in no way injurious to the landscape; but this only, where it sparkles from the midst of a thick shade, and in rare and solitary instances; especially if the country be itself rich, and pleasing, and full of grand forms. On the sides of bleak and desolate moors, we are indeed thankful for the sight of white cottages and white houses plentifully scattered, where, without these, perhaps every thing would be cheerless: this is said, however, with hesitation, and with a wilful sacrifice of some higher enjoyments. But I have certainly seen such buildings glittering at sunrise, and in wandering lights, with no common pleasure. The continental traveller also will remember, that the convents hanging from the rocks of the Rhine, the Rhone, the Danube, or among the Appenines or the mountains of Spain, are not looked at with less complacency when, as is often the case, they happen to be of a brilliant white. But this is perhaps owing, in no small degree, to the contrast of that lively colour with the gloom of monastic life, and to the general want of rural residences of smiling and attractive appearance, in those countries.

The objections to white, as a colour, in large spots or masses in landscapes, especially in a mountainous country, are insurmountable. In nature, pure white is scarcely ever found but in small objects, such as flowers; or in those which are transitory, as the clouds, foam of rivers, and snow. Mr. Gilpin, who notices this, has also recorded the just remark of Mr. Locke, of N——, that white destroys the *gradations* of distance; and, therefore, an object of pure white can scarcely ever be managed with good effect in landscape-painting. Five or six white houses, scattered over a valley, by their obtrusiveness, dot the surface, and divide it into triangles, or other mathematical figures, haunting the eye, and disturbing that repose which might otherwise be perfect. I have seen a single white house materially impair the majesty of a

mountain; cutting away, by a harsh separation, the whole of its base, below the point on which the house stood. Thus was the apparent size of the mountain reduced, not by the interposition of another object in a manner to call forth the imagination, which will give more than the eye loses; but what had been abstracted in this case was left visible; and the mountain appeared to take its beginning, or to rise from the line of the house, instead of its own natural base. But, if I may express my own individual feeling, it is after sunset, at the coming on of twilight, that white objects are most to be complained of. The solemnity and quietness of nature at that time are always marred, and often destroyed by them. When the ground is covered with snow, they are of course inoffensive; and in moonshine they are always pleasing—it is a tone of light with which they accord; and the dimness of the scene is enlivened by an object at once conspicuous and cheerful. I will conclude this subject with noticing, that the cold, slaty colour, which many persons, who have heard the white condemned, have adopted in its stead, must be disapproved of for the reason already given. The flaring yellow runs into the opposite extreme, and is still more censurable. Upon the whole, the safest colour, for general use, is something between a cream and a dust-colour, commonly called stone-colour;—there are, among the Lakes, examples of this that need not be pointed out.

The principle taken as our guide, viz. that the house should be so formed, and of such apparent size and colour, as to admit of its being gently incorporated with the scenery of nature, should also be applied to the management of the grounds and plantations, and is here more urgently needed; for it is from abuses in this department, far more even than from the introduction of exotics in architecture (if the phrase may be used) that this country has suffered. Larch and fir plantations have been spread every where, not merely with a view to profit, but in many instances for the sake of ornament. To those who plant for profit, and are thrusting every other tree out of the way to make room for their favourite, the larch, I would utter first a regret that they should have selected these lovely vales for their vegetable manufactory, when there is so much barren and irreclaimable land in the neighbouring moors, and in other parts of the Island, which might have been had for this purpose at a far cheaper rate. And I will also beg leave to represent to them, that they ought not to be carried away by flattering promises from the speedy growth of this tree; because, in rich soils

and sheltered situations, the wood, though it thrives fast, is full of sap, and of little value; and is, likewise, very subject to ravage from the attacks of insects, and from blight. Accordingly, in Scotland, where planting is much better understood, and carried on upon an incomparably larger scale than among us, good soil and sheltered situations are appropriated to the oak, the ash, and other deciduous trees; and the larch is now generally confined to barren and exposed ground. There the plant, which is a hardy one, is of slower growth; much less liable to injury; and the timber is of better quality. But there are many, whose circumstances permit them, and whose taste leads them, to plant with little regard to profit; and others, less wealthy, who have such a lively feeling of the native beauty of these scenes, that they are laudably not unwilling to make some sacrifices to heighten it. Both these classes of persons, I would entreat to inquire of themselves wherein that beauty which they admire consists. They would then see that, after the feeling has been gratified that prompts us to gather round our dwelling a few flowers and shrubs, which from the circumstance of their not being native, may, by their very looks, remind us that they owe their existence to our hands, and their prosperity to our care; they will see that, after this natural desire has been provided for, the course of all beyond has been predetermined by the spirit of the place. Before I proceed with this subject, I will prepare my way with a remark of general application, by reminding those who are not satisfied with the restraint thus laid upon them, that they are liable to a charge of inconsistency, when they are so eager to change the face of that country, whose native attractions, by the act of erecting their habitations in it, they have so emphatically acknowledged. And surely there is not in this country a single spot that would not have, if well managed, sufficient dignity to support itself, unaided by the productions of other climates, or by elaborate decorations which might be becoming elsewhere.

But to return;—having adverted to the considerations that justify the introduction of a few exotic plants, provided they be confined almost to the doors of the house, we may add, that a transition should be contrived without abruptness, from these foreigners to the rest of the shrubs, which ought to be of the kinds scattered by Nature through the woods—holly, broom, wild-rose, elder, dog-berry, white and black thorn, &c., either these only, or such as are carefully selected in consequence of their uniting in form, and harmonising in colour with them, especially with respect to colour,

when the tints are most diversified, as in autumn and spring. The various sorts of fruit-and-blossom-bearing trees usually found in orchards, to which may be added those of the woods,—namely, the wilding, black cherry tree, and wild cluster-cherry (here called heck-berry), may be happily admitted as an intermediate link between the shrubs and the forest trees; which last ought almost entirely to be such as are natives of the country. Of the birch, one of the most beautiful of the native trees, it may be noticed, that, in dry and rocky situations, it outstrips even the larch, which many persons are tempted to plant merely on account of the speed of its growth. Sycamore, and the Scotch fir (which, when it has room to spread out its arms, is a noble tree) may be placed with advantage near the house; for, from their massiveness, they unite well with buildings, and in some situations with rocks also; having, in their forms and apparent substances, the effect of something intermediate betwixt the immoveableness and solidity of stone, and the sprays and foliage of the lighter trees. If these general rules be just, what shall we say to whole acres of artificial shrubbery and exotic trees among rocks and dashing torrents, with their own wild wood in sight—where we have the whole contents of the nurseryman's catalogue jumbled together—colour at war with colour, and form with form—among the most peaceful subjects of Nature's kingdom every where discord, distraction, and bewilderment! But this deformity, bad as it is, is not so obtrusive as the small patches and large tracts of larch plantations that are over-running the hillsides. To justify our condemnation of these, let us again recur to Nature. The process, by which she forms woods and forests, is as follows. Seeds are scattered indiscriminately by winds, brought by waters, and dropped by birds. They perish, or produce, according as the soil upon which they fall is suited to them; and under the same dependence, the seedling or sucker, if not cropped by animals, thrives, and the tree grows, sometimes single, taking its own shape without constraint, but for the most part being compelled to conform itself to some law imposed upon it by its neighbours. From low and sheltered places, vegetation travels upwards to the more exposed; and the young plants are protected, and to a certain degree fashioned, by those that have preceded them. The continuous mass of foliage which would be thus produced, is broken by rocks, or by glades or open places, where the browsing of animals has prevented the growth of wood. As vegetation ascends, the winds begin also to bear their part in moulding the forms of the

trees; but, thus mutually protected, trees, though not of the hardiest kind, are enabled to climb high up the mountains. Gradually, however, by the quality of the ground, and by increasing exposure, a stop is put to their ascent; the hardy trees only are left; these also, by little and little, give way,—and a wild and irregular boundary is established, graceful in its outline, and never contemplated without some feeling more or less distinct of the powers of nature by which it is imposed.

Contrast the liberty that encourages, and the law that limits, this joint work of nature and time, with the disheartening necessities, restrictions, and disadvantages, under which the artificial planter must proceed, even he whom long observation and fine feeling have best qualified for his task. In the first place his trees, however well chosen and adapted to their several situations, must generally all start at the same time; and this circumstance would of itself prevent that fine connection of parts, that sympathy and organization, if I may so express myself, which pervades the whole of a natural wood, and appears to the eye in its single trees, its masses of foliage, and their various colours when they are held up to view on the side of a mountain; or, when spread over a valley, they are looked down upon from an eminence. It is therefore impossible, under any circumstances, for the artificial planter to rival the beauty of nature. But a moment's thought will show that, if ten thousand of this spiky tree, the larch, are stuck in at once upon the side of a hill, they can grow up into nothing but deformity; that, while they are suffered to stand, we shall look in vain for any of those appearances which are the chief sources of beauty in a natural wood.

It must be acknowledged that the larch, till it has outgrown the size of a shrub, shows, when looked at singly, some elegance in form and appearance, especially in spring, decorated, as it then is, by the pink tassels of its blossoms; but, as a tree, it is less than any other pleasing; its branches (for *boughs* it has none) have no variety in the youth of the tree, and little dignity even when it attains its full growth; *leaves* it cannot be said to have, consequently neither affords shade nor shelter. In spring it becomes green long before the native trees; and its green is so peculiar and vivid that, finding nothing to harmonise with it, wherever it comes forth, a disagreeable speck is produced. In summer, when all other trees are in their pride, it is of a dingy lifeless hue; in autumn of a spiritless unvaried yellow, and in winter it is still more lamentably distinguished from every other deciduous tree of the forest, for they seem only to

sleep, but the larch appears absolutely dead. If an attempt be made to mingle thickets, or a certain proportion of other forest-trees, with the larch, its horizontal branches intolerantly cut them down as with a scythe, or force them to spindle up to keep pace with it. The spike, in which it terminates, renders it impossible, when it is planted in numbers, that the several trees should ever blend together so as to form a mass or masses of wood. Add thousands to tens of thousands, and the appearance is still the same—a collection of separate individual trees, obstinately presenting themselves as such; and which, from whatever point they are looked at, if but seen, may be counted upon the fingers. Sunshine, or shadow, has little power to adorn the surface of such a wood; and the trees not carrying up their heads, the wind raises among them no majestic undulations. It is indeed true, that, in countries where the larch is a native, and where without interruption it may sweep from valley to valley and from hill to hill, a sublime image may be produced by such a forest, in the same manner as by one composed of any other single tree, to the spreading of which no limits can be assigned. For sublimity will never be wanting, where the sense of innumerable multitude is lost in, and alternates with, that of intense unity; and to the ready perception of this effect, similarity and almost identity of individual form and monotony of colour contribute. But this feeling is confined to the native immeasurable forest; no artificial plantation can give it.

The foregoing observations will, I hope, (as nothing has been condemned or recommended without a substantial reason) have some influence upon those who plant for ornament merely. To those who plant for profit, I have already spoken. Let me then entreat that the native deciduous trees may be left in complete possession of the lower ground; and that plantations of larch, if introduced at all, may be confined to the highest and most barren tracts. Interposition of rocks would there break the dreary uniformity of which we have been complaining; and the winds would take hold of the trees, and imprint upon their shapes a wildness congenial to their situation.

Having determined what kinds of trees must be wholly rejected, or at least very sparingly used, by those who are unwilling to disfigure the country; and having shown what kinds ought to be chosen; I should have given, if I had not already overstepped my limits, a few practical rules for the manner in which trees ought to be disposed in planting. But to this subject I should attach little

importance, if I could succeed in banishing such trees as introduce deformity, and could prevail upon the proprietor to confine himself either to those found in the native woods, or to such as accord with them. This is indeed the main point; for, much as these scenes have been injured by what has been taken from them—buildings, trees, and woods, either through negligence, necessity, avarice, or caprice—it is not these removals, but the harsh *additions* that have been made, which are the worst grievance—a standing and unavoidable annoyance. Often have I felt this distinction with mingled satisfaction and regret; for, if no positive deformity or discordance be substituted or superinduced, such is the benignity of nature that, take away from her beauty after beauty, and ornament after ornament, her appearance cannot be marred;—the scars, if any be left, will gradually disappear before a healing spirit; and what remains will still be soothing and pleasing.—

“Many hearts deplored
The fate of those old trees; and oft with pain
The traveller at this day will stop and gaze
On wrongs which nature scarcely seems to heed:
For sheltered places, bosoms, nooks, and bays,
And the pure mountains, and the gentle Tweed,
And the green silent pastures yet remain.”

There are few ancient woods left in this part of England upon which such indiscriminate ravage as is here “deplored” could now be committed. But, out of the numerous copses, fine woods might in time be raised, probably without any sacrifice of profit, by leaving, at the periodical fellings, a due proportion of the healthiest trees to grow up into timber.—This plan has fortunately, in many instances, been adopted; and they, who have set the example, are entitled to the thanks of all persons of taste. As to the management of planting with reasonable attention to ornament, let the images of nature be your guide, and the whole secret lurks in a few words; thickets or underwoods—single trees—trees clustered or in groups—groves—unbroken woods, but with varied masses of foliage—glades—invisible or winding boundaries—in rocky districts, a seemly proportion of rock left wholly bare, and other parts half hidden—disagreeable objects concealed, and formal lines broken—trees climbing up to the horizon, and in some places ascending from its sharp edge in which they are rooted, with the whole body of the tree appearing to stand in the clear sky—in other parts woods surmounted by rocks utterly bare and naked, which add

to the sense of height as if vegetation could not thither be carried, and impress a feeling of duration, power of resistance, and security from change!

I have been induced to speak thus at length with a wish to preserve the native beauty of this delightful district, because still farther changes in its appearance must inevitably follow, from the change of inhabitants and owners which is rapidly taking place.—About the same time that strangers began to be attracted to the country, and to feel a wish to settle in it, the difficulty, that would have stood in the way of their procuring situations, was lessened by an unfortunate alteration in the circumstances of the native peasantry, proceeding from a cause which then began to operate, and is now felt in every house. The family of each man, whether *estatesman* or farmer, formerly had a twofold support; first the produce of his lands and flocks; and secondly, the profit drawn from the employment of the women and children, as manufacturers; spinning their own wool in their own houses, (work chiefly done in the winter season,) and carrying it to market for sale. Hence, however numerous the children, the income of the family kept pace with its increase. But, by the invention and universal application of machinery, this second resource has been wholly cut off; the gains being so far reduced, as not to be sought after but by a few aged persons disabled from other employment. Doubtless, the invention of machinery has not been to these people a pure loss; for the profits arising from home-manufactures operated as a strong temptation to choose that mode of labour in neglect of husbandry. They also participate in the general benefit which the island has derived from the increased value of the produce of land, brought about by the establishment of manufactories, and in the consequent quickening of agricultural industry. But this is far from making them amends; and now that home-manufactures are nearly done away, though the women and children might at many seasons of the year employ themselves with advantage in the fields beyond what they are accustomed to do, yet still all possible exertion in this way cannot be rationally expected from persons whose agricultural knowledge is so confined, and above all where there must necessarily be so small a capital. The consequence, then, is—that, farmers being no longer able to maintain themselves upon small farms, several are united in one, and the buildings go to decay, or are destroyed; and that the lands of the *estatesmen* being mortgaged and the owners constrained to part with them, they fall into the hands of

wealthy purchasers, who in like manner unite and consolidate; and, if they wish to become residents, erect new mansions out of the ruins of the ancient cottages, whose little enclosures, with all the wild graces that grew out of them, disappear. The feudal tenure under which the estates are held has indeed done something towards checking this influx of new settlers; but so strong is the inclination that these galling restraints are endured; and it is probable that in a few years the country on the margin of the Lakes will fall almost entirely into the possession of Gentry, either strangers or natives. It is then much to be wished, that a better taste should prevail among these new proprietors; and, as they cannot be expected to leave things to themselves, that skill and knowledge should prevent unnecessary deviations from that path of simplicity and beauty along which, without design and unconsciously, their humble predecessors have moved. In this wish the author will be joined by persons of pure taste throughout the whole Island, who, by their visits (often repeated) to the Lakes in the North of England, testify that they deem the district a sort of national property, in which every man has a right and interest who has an eye to perceive and a heart to enjoy.

A FEW words may not improperly be annexed, with an especial view to promote the enjoyment of the Tourist. And first, in respect to the Time when this Country can be seen to most advantage. Mr. West, in his well-known Guide to the Lakes, recommends the interval from the beginning of June to the end of August; and, the two latter months being a season of vacation and leisure, it is almost exclusively in these that strangers visit the Country. But that season is by no means the best; there is a want of variety in the colouring of the mountains and woods; which, unless where they are diversified by rocks, are of a monotonous green; and, as a large portion of the Valleys is allotted to hay-grass, a want of variety is found there also. The meadows, however, are sufficiently enlivened after hay-making begins, which is much later than in the southern part of the Island. A stronger objection is rainy weather, setting in often at this period with a vigour, and continuing with a perseverance, that may remind the disappointed and dejected traveller of those deluges of rain, which fall among the Abyssinian

Mountains, for the annual supply of the Nile. The months of September and October (particularly October) are generally attended with much finer weather; and the scenery is then, beyond comparison, more diversified, more splendid, and beautiful; but, on the other hand, short days prevent long excursions, and sharp and chill gales are unfavourable to parties of pleasure out of doors. Nevertheless, to the sincere admirer of Nature, who is in good health and spirits, and at liberty to make a choice, the six weeks following the 1st of September may be recommended in preference to July and August. For there is no inconvenience arising from the season which, to such a person, would not be amply recompensed by the *Autumnal* appearance of any of the more retired Valleys, into which discordant plantation, and unsuitable buildings have not yet found entrance.—In such spots, at this season, there is an admirable compass and proportion of natural harmony in form and colour, through the whole scale of objects;—in the tender green of the after-grass upon the meadows interspersed with islands of grey or mossy rock crowned by shrubs and trees; in the irregular inclosures of standing corn or stubble-fields in like manner broken; in the mountain sides glowing with fern of divers colours; in the calm blue Lakes and River-pools; and in the foliage of the trees, through all the tints of Autumn, from the pale and brilliant yellow of the birch and ash, to the deep greens of the unfaded oak and alder, and of the ivy upon the rocks, upon the trees, and the cottages. Yet, as most travellers are either stinted or stint themselves for time, I would recommend the space between the middle or last week in May and the middle or last week of June, as affording the best combination of long days, fine weather, and variety of impressions. Few of the native trees are then in full leaf; but, for whatever may be wanting in depth of shade, far more than an equivalent will be found in the diversity of foliage, in the blossoms of the fruit-and-berry-bearing trees which abound in the woods, and in the golden flowers of the broom and other shrubs, with which many of the copses are interveined. In those woods, also, and on those mountain-sides which have a northern aspect, and in the deep dells, many of the spring-flowers still linger; while the open and sunny places are stocked with the flowers of approaching summer. And, besides, is not an exquisite pleasure still untasted by him who has not heard the choir of Linnets and Thrushes chaunting their love-songs in the copses, woods, and hedge-rows, of a mountainous country; safe from the birds of prey, which build in the inaccessible crags, and are at all

hours seen or heard wheeling about in the air? The number of these formidable creatures is probably the cause why, in the *narrow* valleys, there are no Sky-larks; as the Destroyer would be enabled to dart upon them from the near and surrounding crags, before they could descend to their ground-nests for protection. It is not often that Nightingales resort to these Vales; but almost all the other tribes of our English warblers are numerous; and their notes, when listened to by the side of broad still waters, or when heard in unison with the murmuring of mountain-brooks, have the compass of their power enlarged accordingly. There is also an imaginative influence in the voice of the Cuckoo, when that voice has taken possession of a deep mountain valley, very different from any thing which can be excited by the same sound in a flat country. Nor must a circumstance be omitted which here renders the close of Spring especially interesting; I mean the practice of bringing down the ewes from the mountains to yearn in the valleys and enclosed grounds. The herbage being thus cropped as it springs, that first tender emerald green of the season, which would otherwise have lasted little more than a fortnight, is prolonged in the pastures and meadows for many weeks; while they are farther enlivened by the multitude of lambs bleating and skipping about. These sportive creatures, as they gather strength, are turned out upon the open mountains, and with their slender limbs, their snow-white colour, and their wild and light motions, beautifully accord or contrast with the rocks and lawns, upon which they must now begin to seek their food. And last, but not least, at this time the traveller will be sure of room and comfortable accommodation, even in the smaller inns. I am aware that few of those, who may be inclined to profit by this recommendation will be able to do so, as the time and manner of an excursion of this kind is mostly regulated by circumstances which prevent an entire freedom of choice. It will therefore be more pleasant to me to observe, that, though the months of July and August are liable to many objections, yet it not unfrequently happens that the weather, at this time, is not more wet and stormy than they, who are really capable of enjoying the sublime forms of Nature in their utmost sublimity, would desire. For no Traveller, provided he be in good health and with any command of time, would have a just privilege to visit such scenes, if he could grudge the price of a little confinement among them or interruption in his journey for the sight or sound of a storm coming-on or clearing-away. Insensible must he be who would not congratulate

himself upon the bold bursts of sunshine, the descending vapours, wandering lights and shadows, and the invigorated torrents and water-falls, with which broken weather, in a mountainous region, is accompanied. At such a time there is no cause to complain, either of the monotony of midsummer colouring or the glaring atmosphere of long, cloudless, and hot days.

Thus far respecting the most eligible season for visiting this country. As to the order in which objects are best seen—a Lake being composed of water flowing from higher grounds, and expanding itself till its receptacle is filled to the brim,—it follows from the nature of things, that it will appear to most advantage when approached from its outlet, especially if the Lake be in a mountainous country; for, by this way of approach, the traveller faces the grander features of the scene, and is gradually conducted into its most sublime recesses. Now, every one knows, that from amenity and beauty, the transition to sublimity is easy and favourable; but the reverse is not so; for, after the faculties have been raised by communion with the sublime, they are indisposed to humbler excitement.

It is not likely that a mountain will be ascended without disappointment if a wide range of prospect be the object, unless either the summit be reached before sun-rise, or the visitant remains there until the time of sun-set, and afterwards. The precipitous sides of the mountain, and the neighbouring summits, may be seen with effect under any atmosphere which allows them to be seen at all; but *he* is the most fortunate adventurer who chances to be involved in vapours which open and let in an extent of country partially, or, dispersing suddenly, reveal the whole region from centre to circumference.

After all, it is upon the *mind* which a Traveller brings along with him that his acquisitions, whether of pleasure or profit, must principally depend.—May I be allowed a concluding word upon this subject?

Nothing is more injurious to genuine feeling than the practice of hastily and ungraciously depreciating the face of one country by comparing it with that of another. True it is, *Qui bene distinguit bene docet*; yet fastidiousness is a wretched travelling companion; and the best guide to which in matters of taste we can entrust ourselves, is a disposition to be pleased. For example, if a Traveller be among the Alps, let him surrender up his mind to the fury of the gigantic torrents, and take delight in the contemplation of their

almost irresistible violence, without complaining of the monotony of their foaming course, or being disgusted with the muddiness of the water—apparent wherever it is unagitated. In Cumberland and Westmorland let not the comparative weakness of the streams prevent him from sympathising with such impetuosity as they possess; and, making the most of present objects, let him, as he justly may do, observe with admiration the unrivalled brilliancy of the water, and that variety of motion, mood, and character, that arises out of the want of those resources by which the power of the streams in the Alps is supported.—Again, with respect to the mountains; though these are comparatively of diminutive size, though there is little of perpetual snow, and no voice of summer-avalanches is heard among them; and though traces left by the ravage of the elements are here comparatively rare and unimpressive, yet out of this very deficiency proceeds a sense of stability and permanence that is, to many minds, more grateful—

“While the coarse rushes to the sweeping breeze
Sigh forth their ancient melodies.”

See the Ode, Pass of Kirkstone.

Among the Alps are few places that do not preclude this feeling of tranquil sublimity. Havoc, and ruin, and desolation, and encroachment, are every where more or less obtruded; and it is difficult, notwithstanding the naked loftiness of the *Pikes*, and the snow-capped summits of the *Mounts*, to escape from the depressing sensation that the whole are in a rapid process of dissolution, and, were it not that the destructive agency must abate as the heights diminish, would, in time to come, be levelled with the plains. Nevertheless I would relish to the utmost the demonstrations of every species of power at work to effect such changes.

From these general views let us descend a moment to detail. A stranger to mountain-scenery naturally on his first arrival looks out for sublimity in every object that admits of it; and is almost always disappointed. For this disappointment there exists, I believe, no general preventive; nor is it desirable that there should. But, with regard to one class of objects, there is a point in which injurious expectations may be easily corrected. It is generally supposed that waterfalls are scarcely worth being looked at except after much rain, and that, the more swoln the stream, the more fortunate the spectator; but this is true only of large cataracts with sublime accompaniments; and not even of these without some

drawbacks. The principal charm of the smaller waterfalls or cascades, consists in certain proportions of form and affinities of colour, among the component parts of the scene, and in the contrast maintained between the falling water and that which is apparently at rest; or rather settling gradually into quiet, in the pool below. Peculiarly, also, is the beauty of such a scene, where there is naturally so much agitation, heightened here by the *glimmering*, and, towards the verge of the pool, by the *steady*, reflection of the surrounding images. Now, all those delicate distinctions are destroyed by heavy floods, and the whole stream rushes along in foam and tumultuous confusion. I will conclude with observing, that a happy proportion of component parts is generally noticeable among the landscapes of the North of England; and, in this characteristic essential to a perfect picture, they surpass the scenes of Scotland, and, in a still greater degree, those of Switzerland.

POEMS WRITTEN AS MEMORIALS OF TOURS, II

Most of the *Memorials of a Tour on the Continent, 1820* were written between November 1820, after Wordsworth's return, and November 1821. They were published in 1822. Six of the thirty-eight poems are included here.

Yarrow Revisited, And Other Poems was published in 1835. In the Fenwick Note Wordsworth says:

In the autumn of 1831, my daughter [Dora] and I set off from Rydal to visit Sir Walter Scott before his departure for Italy. This journey had been delayed by an inflammation in my eyes till we found that the time appointed for his leaving home would be too near for him to receive us without considerable inconvenience. Nevertheless we proceeded and reached Abbotsford on Monday [September 19]. I was then scarcely able to lift up my eyes to the light. How sadly changed did I find him from the man I had seen so healthy, gay, and hopeful, a few years before. . . . At noon on Thursday we left Abbotsford, and in the morning of that day Sir W. and I had a serious conversation *tête-à-tête*, when he spoke with gratitude of the happy life which upon the whole he had led.

Sonnets Composed or Suggested During a Tour in Scotland in the Summer of 1833 were published in *Yarrow Revisited* in 1835. Of the forty-eight poems in this series only four are here reprinted.

Memorials of a Tour in Italy, 1837, were published in *Poems, Chiefly of Early and Late Years*, 1842. There is now a decisive change in the quality of his "topographical" writing. This may be seen in a note by Crabb Robinson:

Little or nothing was written on the journey. Seeds were cast into the earth, and they took root slowly. . . . W. repeatedly said of this journey, 'It is too late.' . . . It often happened that objects of universal attraction served chiefly to bring back to his mind absent objects dear to him.

This is confirmed by the Fenwick Note:

During my whole life I had felt a strong desire to visit Rome and the other celebrated cities and regions of Italy, but did not think myself justified in incurring the necessary expense till I received from Mr. Moxon, the publisher of a large edition of my poems, a sum sufficient to enable me to gratify my wish without encroaching upon what I considered due to my family. . . . These Memorials of that Tour touch upon but a very few of the places and objects that interested me, and, in what they do advert to, are for the most part much slighter than I could wish.

The finest of the poems related to this tour, *Musings near Aquapendente*, was not written until nearly four years after the visit, in 1841, in Wordsworth's seventy-first year.

Composed at Rydal was written and published in 1838. It is printed here, following Wordsworth's plan, as a pendant to the Italian poems.

MEMORIALS OF A TOUR ON THE CONTINENT, 1820

Dedication

DEAR Fellow-Travellers! think not that the Muse
Presents to notice these memorial Lays,
Hoping the general eye thereon will gaze,
As on a mirror that gives back the hues
Of living Nature; no—though free to chuse
The greenest bowers, the most inviting ways,
The fairest landscapes and the brightest days,
She felt too deeply what her skill must lose.
For You she wrought;—ye only can supply
The life, the truth, the beauty: she confides
In that enjoyment which with you abides,
Trusts to your love and vivid memory;
Thus far contented that for You her verse
Shall lack not power the “meeting soul to pierce!”

W. WORDSWORTH.

Rydal Mount, January, 1822.

Fish-Women.—On Landing at Calais

’TIS said, fantastic Ocean doth enfold
The likeness of whate’er on Land is seen;
But, if the Nereid Sisters and their Queen,
Above whose heads the Tide so long hath roll’d,
The Dames resemble whom we here behold,
How terrible beneath the opening waves
To sink, and meet them in their fretted caves,
Withered, grotesque, immeasurably old,
And shrill and fierce in accent!—Fear it not;
For they Earth’s fairest Daughters do excel;

Pure unmolested beauty is their lot;
Their voices into liquid music swell,
Thrilling each pearly cleft and sparry grot—
The undisturbed Abodes where Sea-nymphs dwell!

Bruges

BRUGES I saw attired with golden light
(Streamed from the west) as with a robe of power:
'Tis passed away;—and now the sunless hour,
That slowly introducing peaceful night
Best suits with fallen grandeur, to my sight
Offers her beauty, her magnificence,
And all the graces left her for defence
Against the injuries of time, the spite
Of Fortune, and the desolating storms
Of future War. Advance not—spare to hide,
O gentle Power of Darkness! these mild hues;
Obscure not yet these silent avenues
Of stateliest Architecture, where the forms
Of Nun-like Females, with soft motion, glide!

Hymn

FOR THE BOATMEN,
AS THEY APPROACH THE RAPIDS,
UNDER THE CASTLE OF HEIDELBERG

JESU! bless our slender Boat,
By the current swept along;
Loud its threatenings—let them not
Drown the music of a Song
Breathed thy mercy to implore,
Where these troubled waters roar!

Lord and Saviour! who art seen
Bleeding on that precious Rood;
If, while through the meadows green
Gently wound the peaceful flood,
We forgot Thee, do not Thou
Disregard thy Suppliants now!

Higher, like yon ancient Tower
 Watching o'er the River's bed,
 Fling the shadow of thy power,
 Else we sleep among the Dead;
 Traveller on the billowy Sea,
 Shield us in our jeopardy!

Guide our Bark among the waves;
 Through the rocks our passage smooth;
 Where the whirlpool frets and raves
 Let Thy love its anger soothe;
 All our hope is placed in Thee;
 Miserere Domine!

Our Lady of the Snow

[How delicious was the descent over the velvet turf, towards the Chapel of our Lady of the Snow!—seen below within a narrow steep glen. The air still fresh and cool, we gradually find ourselves enclosed by the declivities of the glen; those rugged steeps are hung with pine trees, narrow cataracts come down the clefts in unbroken white lines—or over the facings of rock, in drops and stages. Side by side with the central rivulet, we go on still descending, though with far slower pace, and come to the village of Rigi, and our Lady's Chapel cradled in the slip of the dell, and, at this tranquil time, *lulled* by the voices of the streams. The interior of the Chapel is hung with hundreds of offerings—staves, crutches etc., etc., and pictures representing marvellous escapes, with written records of vows performed—and dangers averted through the gracious protection of our Lady of the Snow." Dorothy Wordsworth's *Journal*, 19 August 1820.]

MEET Virgin Mother, more benign
 Than fairest Star upon the height
 Of thy own mountain,¹ set to keep
 Lone vigils thro' the hours of sleep,
 What eye can look upon thy shrine
 Untroubled at the sight?

These crowded Offerings as they hang
 In sign of misery relieved,
 Even these, without intent of theirs,
 Report of comfortless despairs,
 Of many a deep and cureless pang
 And confidence deceived.

¹ Mount Righi.

To Thee, in this aerial cleft,
As to a common centre, tend
All sufferings that no longer rest
On mortal succour, all distress
That pine of human hope bereft,
Nor wish for earthly friend.

And hence, O Virgin Mother mild!
Tho' plenteous flowers around thee blow,
Not only from the dreary strife
Of Winter, but the storms of life,
Thee have thy Votaries aptly styled,
"Our Lady of the Snow."

Even for the Man who stops not here,
But down the irriguous valley hies,
Thy very name, O Lady! flings,
O'er blooming fields and gushing springs,
A holy Shadow soft and dear
Of chastening sympathies!

Nor falls that intermingling shade
To Summer gladness unkind;
It chastens only to requite
With gleams of fresher, purer, light;
While, o'er the flower-enamelled glade,
More sweetly breathes the wind.

But on!—a tempting downward way,
A verdant path before us lies;
Clear shines the glorious sun above;
Then give free course to joy and love,
Deeming the evil of the day
Sufficient for the wise.

Sonnet

THE LAST SUPPER, BY LEONARDO DA VINCI, IN THE REFECTORY OF THE CONVENT
OF MARIA DELLA GRAZIA—MILAN

THO' searching damps and many an envious flaw
Have marr'd this Work, the calm etherial grace,
The love deep-seated in the Saviour's face,
The mercy, goodness, have not failed to awe
The Elements; as they do melt and thaw
The heart of the Beholder—and erase
(At least for one rapt moment) every trace
Of disobedience to the primal law.
The annunciation of the dreadful truth
Made to the Twelve, survives: the brow, the cheek,
And hand reposing on the board in ruth
Of what it utters,¹ while the unguilty seek
Unquestionable meanings, still bespeak
A labour worthy of eternal youth!

¹ "The hand
Sang with the voice, and this the argument."
MILTON

YARROW REVISITED, 1831

A Place of Burial in the South of Scotland

PART fenced by man, part by a ragged steep
That curbs a foaming brook, a Grave-yard lies:
The Hare's best couching-place for fearless sleep;
Which moonlit Elves, far seen by credulous eyes,
Enter in dance. Of Church, or Sabbath ties,
No vestige now remains; yet thither creep
Bereft Ones, and in lowly anguish weep
Their prayers out to the wind and naked skies.
Proud tomb is none; but rudely-sculptured knights,
By humble choice of plain old times, are seen
Level with earth, among the hillocks green:
Union not sad, when sunny daybreak smites
The spangled turf, and neighbouring thickets ring
With *jubilate* from the choirs of spring!

On the Sight of a Manse in the South of Scotland

SAY, ye far-travelled clouds, far-seeing hills,
Among the happiest-looking Homes of men
Scatter'd all Britain over, through deep glen,
On airy upland, and by forest rills,
And o'er wide plains whereon the sky distils
Has lark's loved warblings; does aught to meet your ken
More fit to animate the Poet's pen,
Aught that more surely by its aspect fills
Pure minds with sinless envy, than the Abode
Of the good Priest: who, faithful through all hours
To his high charge, and truly serving God,
Has yet a heart and hand for trees and flowers,
Enjoys the walks his Predecessors trod,
Nor covets lineal rights in lands and towers.

The Trosachs

THERE'S not a nook within this solemn Pass,
But were an apt confessional for One
Taught by his summer spent, his autumn gone,
That Life is but a tale of morning grass,
Withered at eve. From scenes of art that chase
That thought away, turn, and with watchful eyes
Feed it 'mid Nature's old felicities,
Rocks, rivers, and smooth lakes more clear than glass
Untouched, unbreathed upon. Thrice happy Quest,
If from a golden perch of aspen spray
(October's workmanship to rival May)
The pensive warbler of the ruddy breast
This moral sweeten by a heaven-taught lay,
Lulling the year, with all its cares, to rest.

SONNETS

COMPOSED OR SUGGESTED DURING A TOUR IN SCOTLAND IN THE SUMMER OF 1833

Having been prevented by the lateness of the season, in 1831, from visiting Staffa and Iona, the author made these the principal objects of a short tour in the summer of 1833, of which the following series of sonnets is a Memorial. The course pursued was down the Cumberland river Derwent, and to Whitehaven; thence (by the Isle of Man, where a few days were passed) up to the Frith of Clyde to Greenock, then to Oban, Staffa, Iona; and back towards England, by Loch Awe, Inverary, Loch Goil-head, Greenock, and through parts of Renfrewshire, Ayrshire, and Dumfries-shire to Carlisle, and thence up the river Eden, and homewards by Ullswater.

At Sea off the Isle of Man

BOLD words affirmed, in days when faith was strong,
And doubts and scruples seldom teased the brain,
That no adventurer's bark had power to gain
These shores if he approached them bent on wrong;
For, suddenly up-conjured from the Main,
Mists rose to hide the Land—that search, though long
And eager, might be still pursued in vain.
O Fancy, what an age was *that* for song!
That age, when not by *laws* inanimate,
As men believed, the waters were impelled,
The air controlled, the stars their courses held,
But element and orb on *acts* did wait
Of *Powers* endued with visible form, instinct
With will, and to their work by passion linked.

Iona

(UPON LANDING)

WITH earnest look, to every voyager,
Some ragged child holds up for sale a store
Of wave-worn pebbles, pleading on the shore
Where once came monk and nun with gentle stir,

Blessings to give, news ask, or suit prefer.
 But see yon neat trim church, a grateful speck
 Of novelty amid this sacred wreck—
 Nay spare thy scorn, haughty Philosopher!
 Fallen though she be, this Glory of the west,
 Still on her sons the beams of mercy shine;
 And “hopes, perhaps more heavenly bright than thine,
 A grace by thee unsought and unpossessed,
 A faith more fixed, a rapture more divine
 Shall gild their passage to eternal rest.”¹

“THERE!” said a Stripling, pointing with meet pride
 Towards a low roof with green trees half concealed,
 “Is this Mossgiel farm; and that’s the very field
 Where Burns ploughed up the Daisy.” Far and wide
 A plain below stretched sea-ward, while, descried
 Above sea-clouds, the Peaks of Arran rose;
 And, by that simple notice, the repose
 Of earth, sky, sea, and air, was vivified.
 Beneath “the random *biold* of clod or stone”
 Myriads of Daisies have shone forth in flower
 Near the lark’s nest, and in their natural hour
 Have passed away, less happy than the One
 That by the unwilling ploughshare died to prove
 The tender charm of Poetry and Love.

The River Eden, Cumberland

EDEN! till now thy beauty had I viewed
 By glimpses only, and confess with shame
 That verse of mine, whate’er its varying mood,
 Repeats but once the sound of thy sweet name;
 Yet fetched from Paradise that honour came,
 Rightfully borne; for Nature gives thee flowers
 That have no rivals among British bowers;

¹ The four last lines of this sonnet are adopted from a well-known sonnet of Russel, as conveying the author’s feeling better than any words of his own could do.

And thy bold rocks are worthy of their fame.
Measuring thy course, fair Stream! at length I pay
To my life's neighbour dues of neighbourhood;
But I have traced thee on thy winding way
With pleasure sometimes by the thought restrained
That things far off are toiled for, while a good
Not sought, because too near, is seldom gained.

MEMORIALS OF A TOUR IN ITALY, 1837

To Henry Crabbe Robinson

COMPANION! by whose buoyant Spirit cheered,
In whose experience trusting, day by day
Treasures I gained with zeal that neither feared
The toils nor felt the crosses of the way,
These records take, and happy should I be
Were but the Gift a meet Return to thee.
For kindness that never ceased to flow,
And prompt self-sacrifice to which I owe
Far more than any heart but mine can know.

W. WORDSWORTH.

RYDAL MOUNT,
Feb. 14th, 1842.

The Tour of which the following Poems are very inadequate remembrances was shortened by report, too well founded, of the prevalence of Cholera at Naples. To make some amends for what was reluctantly left unseen in the South of Italy, we visited the Tuscan Sanctuaries among the Apennines, and the principal Italian Lakes among the Alps. Neither of those lakes, nor of Venice, is there any notice in these Poems, chiefly because I have touched upon them elsewhere. See, in particular, "Descriptive Sketches," "Memorials of a Tour on the Continent in 1820," and a Sonnet upon the extinction of the Venetian Republic.

Musings near Aquapendente

April, 1837

YE Apennines! with all your fertile vales
Deeply embosomed, and your winding shores
Of either sea, an Islander by birth,
A Mountaineer by habit, would resound
Your praise, in meet accordance with your claims
Bestowed by Nature, or from man's great deeds

Inherited:—presumptuous thought!—it fled
 Like vapour, like a towering cloud dissolved.
 Not, therefore, shall my mind give way to sadness;—
 Yon snow-white torrent-fall, plumb down it drops
 Yet ever hangs or seems to hang in air,
 Lulling the leisure of that high perched town,
 Aquapendente, in her lofty site
 Its neighbour and its namesake—town, and flood
 Forth flashing out of its own gloomy chasm
 Bright sunbeams—the fresh verdure of this lawn
 Strewn with grey rocks, and on the horizon's verge,
 O'er intervenient waste, through glimmering haze,
 Unquestionably kenned, that cone-shaped hill
 With fractured summit, no indifferent sight
 To travellers, from such comforts as are thine,
 Bleak Radicofani! escaped with joy—
 These are before me; and the varied scene
 May well suffice, till noon-tide's sultry heat
 Relax, to fix and satisfy the mind
 Passive yet pleased. What! with this Broom in flower
 Close at my side. She bids me fly to greet
 Her sisters, soon like her to be attired
 With golden blossoms opening at the feet
 Of my own Fairfield. The glad greeting given,
 Given with a voice and by a look returned
 Of old companionship, Time counts not minutes
 Ere, from accustomed paths, familiar fields,
 The local Genius hurries me aloft,
 Transported over that cloud-wooing hill,
 Seat Sandal, a fond suitor of the clouds,
 With dream-like smoothness, to Helvellyn's top,
 There to alight upon crisp moss and range,
 Obtaining ampler boon, at every step,
 Of visual sovereignty—hills multitudinous,
 (Not Apennine can boast of fairer) hills
 Pride of two nations, wood and lake and plains,
 And prospect right below of deep coves shaped
 By skeleton arms, that, from the mountain's trunk
 Extended, clasp the winds, with mutual moan
 Struggling for liberty, while undismayed
 The shepherd struggles with them. Onward thence

And downward by the skirt of Greenside fell,
 And by Glenridding-screes, and low Glencoign,
 Places forsaken now, but loving still
 The muses, as they loved them in the days
 Of the old minstrels and the border bards.—
 But here am I fast bound;—and let it pass,
 The simple rapture;—who that travels far
 To feed his mind with watchful eyes could share
 Or wish to share it?—One there surely was,
 “The Wizard of the North,” with anxious hope
 Brought to this genial climate, when disease
 Preyed upon body and mind—yet not the less
 Had his sunk eye kindled at those dear words
 That spake of bards and minstrels; and his spirit
 Had flown with mine to old Helvellyn’s brow,
 Where once together, in his day of strength,
 We stood rejoicing, as if earth were free
 From sorrow, like the sky above our heads.

Years followed years, and when, upon the eve
 Of his last going from Tweed-side, thought turned,
 Or by another’s sympathy was led,
 To this bright land, Hope was for him no friend,
 Knowledge no help; Imagination shaped
 No promise. Still, in more than ear-deep seats,
 Survives for me, and cannot but survive
 The tone of voice which wedded borrowed words
 To sadness not their own, when, with faint smile
 Forced by intent to take from speech its edge,
 He said, “When I am there, although ’tis fair,
 ’Twill be another Yarrow.” Prophecy
 More than fulfilled, as gay Campania’s shores
 Soon witnessed, and the city of seven hills,
 Her sparkling fountains, and her mouldering tombs;
 And more than all, that Eminence which showed
 Her splendors, seen, not felt, the while he stood
 A few short steps (painful they were) apart
 From Tasso’s Convent-haven, and retired grave.

Peace to their Spirits! why should Poesy
 Yield to the lure of vain regret, and hover

In gloom on wings with confidence outspread
 To move in sunshine?—Utter thanks, my Soul!
 Tempered with awe, and sweetened by compassion
 For them who in the shades of sorrow dwell,
 That I—so near the term to human life
 Appointed by man's common heritage,
 Frail as the frailest, one withal (if that
 Deserve a thought) but little known to fame—
 Am free to rove where Nature's loveliest looks,
 Art's noblest relics, history's rich bequests,
 Failed to reanimate and but feebly cheered
 The whole world's Darling—free to rove at will
 O'er high and low, and if requiring rest,
 Rest from enjoyment only.

Thanks poured forth
 For what thus far hath blessed my wanderings, thanks
 Fervent but humble as the lips can breathe
 Where gladness seems a duty—let me guard
 Those seeds of expectation which the fruit
 Already gathered in this favoured Land
 Enfolds within its core. The faith be mine,
 That He who guides and governs all, approves
 When gratitude, though disciplined to look
 Beyond these transient spheres, doth wear a crown
 Of earthly hope put on with trembling hand;
 Nor is least pleased, we trust, when golden beams,
 Reflected through the mists of age, from hours
 Of innocent delight, remote or recent,
 Shoot but a little way—'tis all they can—
 Into the doubtful future. Who would keep
 Power must resolve to cleave to it through life,
 Else it deserts him, surely as he lives.
 Saints would not grieve nor guardian angels frown
 If one—while tossed, as was my lot to be,
 In a frail bark urged by two slender oars
 Over waves rough and deep, that, when they broke,
 Dashed their white foam against the palace walls
 Of Genoa the superb—should there be led
 To meditate upon his own appointed tasks,
 However humble in themselves, with thoughts
 Raised and sustained by memory of Him

Who oftentimes within those narrow bounds
 Rocked on the surge, there tried his spirit's strength
 And grasp of purpose, long ere sailed his ship
 To lay a new world open.

Nor less prized
 Be those impressions which incline the heart
 To mild, to lowly, and to seeming weak,
 Bend that way her desires. The dew, the storm—
 The dew whose moisture fell in gentle drops
 On the small hyssop destined to become,
 By Hebrew ordinance devoutly kept,
 A purifying instrument—the storm
 That shook on Lebanon the cedar's top,
 And as it shook, enabling the blind roots
 Further to force their way, endowed its trunk
 With magnitude and strength fit to uphold
 The glorious temple—did alike proceed
 From the same gracious will, were both an offspring
 Of bounty infinite.

Between Powers that aim
 Higher to lift their lofty heads, impelled
 By no profane ambition, Powers that thrive
 By conflict, and their opposites, that trust
 In lowliness—a mid-way tract there lies
 Of thoughtful sentiment for every mind
 Pregnant with good. Young, Middle-aged, and Old,
 From century on to century, must have known
 The emotion—nay, more fitly were it said—
 The blest tranquillity that sunk so deep
 Into my spirit, when I paced, enclosed
 In Pisa's Campo Santo, the smooth floor
 Of its Arcades paved with sepulchral slabs,
 And through each window's open fret-work looked
 O'er the blank Area of sacred earth
 Fetched from Mount Calvary, or haply delved
 In precincts nearer to the Saviour's tomb,
 By hands of men, humble as brave, who fought
 For its deliverance—a capacious field
 That to descendants of the dead it holds
 And to all living mute memento breathes,
 More touching far than aught which on the walls

Is pictured, or their epitaphs can speak,
 Of the changed City's long-departed power,
 Glory, and wealth, which, perilous as they are,
 Here did not kill, but nourished, Piety.
 And, high above that length of cloistral roof,
 Peering in air and backed by azure sky,
 To kindred contemplations ministers
 The Baptistery's dome, and that which swells
 From the Cathedral pile; and with the twain
 Conjoined in prospect mutable or fixed
 (As hurry on in eagerness the feet,
 Or pause) the summit of the Leaning-tower.
 Nor less remuneration waits on him
 Who having left the Cemetery stands
 In the Tower's shadow, of decline and fall
 Admonished not without some sense of fear,
 Fear that soon vanishes before the sight
 Of splendor unextinguished, pomp unscathed
 And beauty unimpaired. Grand in itself,
 And for itself, the assemblage, grand and fair
 To view, and for the mind's consenting eye
 A type of age in man, upon its front
 Bearing the world-acknowledged evidence
 Of past exploits, nor fondly after more
 Struggling against the stream of destiny,
 But with its peaceful majesty content.
 —Oh what a spectacle at every turn
 The Place unfolds, from pavement skinned with moss,
 Or grass-grown spaces, where the heaviest foot
 Provokes no echoes, but must softly tread;
 Where Solitude with Silence paired stops short
 Of Desolation, and to Ruin's scythe
 Decay submits not.

But where'er my steps
 Shall wander, chiefly let me cull with care
 Those images of genial beauty, oft
 Too lovely to be pensive in themselves
 But by reflection made so, which do best,
 And fittest serve to crown with fragrant wreaths
 Life's cup when almost filled with years, like mine.
 —How lovely robed in forenoon light and shade,

Each ministering to each, didst thou appear,
 Savona, Queen of territory fair
 As aught that marvellous coast thro' all its length
 Yields to the Stranger's eye. Remembrance holds
 As a selected treasure thy one cliff,
 That, while it wore for melancholy crest
 A shattered Convent, yet rose proud to have
 Clinging to its steep sides a thousand herbs
 And shrubs, whose pleasant looks gave proof how kind
 The breath of air can be where earth had else
 Seemed churlish. And behold, both far and near,
 Garden and field all decked with orange bloom,
 And peach and citron, in Spring's mildest breeze
 Expanding; and, along the smooth shore curved
 Into a natural port, a tideless sea,
 To that mild breeze with motion and with voice
 Softly responsive; and, attuned to all
 Those vernal charms of sight and sound, appeared
 Smooth space of turf which from the guardian fort
 Sloped seaward, turf whose tender April green,
 In coolest climes too fugitive, might even here
 Plead with the sovereign Sun for longer stay
 Than his unmitigated beams allow,
 Nor plead in vain, if beauty could preserve,
 From mortal change, aught that is born on earth
 Or doth on time depend.

While on the brink

Of that high Convent-crested cliff I stood,
 Modest Savona! over all did brood
 A pure poetic Spirit—as the breeze,
 Mild—as the verdure, fresh—the sunshine, bright,
 Thy gentle Chiabrera! not a stone,
 Mural or level with the trodden floor,
 In Church or Chapel, if my curious quest
 Missed not the truth, retains a single name
 Of young or old, warrior, or saint, or sage,
 To whose dear memories his sepulchral verse
 Paid simple tribute, such as might have flowed
 From the clear spring of a plain English heart,
 Say rather, one in native fellowship
 With all who want not skill to couple grief

With praise, as genuine admiration prompts.
 The grief, the praise, are severed from their dust,
 Yet in his page the records of that worth
 Survive, uninjured;—glory then to words,
 Honour to word-preserving Arts, and hail
 Ye kindred local influences that still,
 If Hope's familiar whispers merit faith,
 Await my steps when they the breezy height
 Shall range of philosophic Tusculum;
 Or Sabine vales explored inspire a wish
 To meet the shade of Horace by the side
 Of his Blandusian fount; or I invoke
 His presence to point out the spot where once
 He sate, and eulogized with earnest pen
 Peace, leisure, freedom, moderate desires;
 And all the immunities of rural life
 Extolled, behind Vacuna's crumbling fane.
 Or let me loiter, soothed with what is given
 Nor asking more on that delicious Bay,
 Parthenope's Domain—Virgilian haunt,
 Illustrated with never-dying verse,
 And, by the Poet's laurel-shaded tomb,
 Age after age to Pilgrims from all lands
 Endeared.

And who—if not a man as cold
 In heart as dull in brain—while pacing ground
 Chosen by Rome's legendary Bards, high minds
 Out of her early struggles well inspired
 To localize heroic acts—could look
 Upon the spots with undelighted eye,
 Though even to their last syllable the Lays
 And very names of those who gave them birth
 Have perished?—Verily, to her utmost depth,
 Imagination feels what Reason fears not
 To recognize, the lasting virtue lodged
 In those bold fictions that, by deeds assigned
 To the Valerian, Fabian, Curian Race,
 And others like in fame, created Powers
 With attributes from History derived,
 By Poesy irradiate, and yet graced,
 Through marvellous felicity of skill,

With something more propitious to high aims
Than either, pent within her separate sphere,
Can oft with justice claim.

And not disdaining

Union with those primeval energies
To virtue consecrate, stoop ye from your height,
Christian Traditions! at my Spirit's call
Descend, and, on the brow of ancient Rome
As she survives in ruin, manifest
Your glories mingled with the brightest hues
Of her memorial halo, fading, fading,
But never to be extinct while Earth endures.
O come, if undishonoured by the prayer,
From all her Sanctuaries!—Open for my feet
Ye Catacombs, give to mine eyes a glimpse
Of the Devout, as, 'mid your glooms convened
For safety, they of yore enclasped the Cross
On knees that ceased from trembling, or intoned
Their orisons with voices half-suppressed,
But sometimes heard, or fancied to be heard,
Even at this hour.

And thou Mamertine prison,

Into that vault receive me from whose depth
Issues, revealed in no presumptuous vision,
Albeit lifting human to divine,
A Saint, the Church's Rock, the mystic Keys
Grasped in his hand; and lo! with upright sword
Prefiguring his own impendent doom,
The Apostle of the Gentiles; both prepared
To suffer pains with heathen scorn and hate
Inflicted;—blessed Men, for so to Heaven
They follow their dear Lord!

Time flows—nor winds,

Nor stagnates, nor precipitates his course,
But many a benefit borne upon his breast
For human-kind sinks out of sight, is gone,
No one knows how; nor seldom is put forth
An angry arm that snatches good away,
Never perhaps to reappear. The Stream
Has to our generation brought and brings
Innumerable gains; yet we, who now

Walk in the light of day, pertain full surely
 To a chilled age, most pitably shut out
 From that which *is* and actuates, by forms,
 Abstractions, and by lifeless fact to fact
 Minutely linked with diligence uninspired,
 Unrectified, unguided, unsustained,
 By godlike insight. To this fate is doomed
 Science, wide-spread and spreading still as be
 Her conquests, in the world of sense made known.
 So with the internal mind it fares; and so
 With morals, trusting, in contempt or fear
 Of vital principle's controlling law,
 To her pur-blind guide Expediency; and so
 Suffers religious faith. Elate with view
 Of what is won, we overlook or scorn
 The best that should keep pace with it, and must,
 Else more and more the general mind will droop,
 Even as if bent on perishing. There lives
 No faculty within us which the Soul
 Can spare, and humblest earthly Weal demands,
 For dignity not placed beyond her reach,
 Zealous co-operation of all means
 Given or acquired, to raise us from the mire,
 And liberate our hearts from low pursuits.
 By gross Utilities enslaved we need
 More of ennobling impulse from the past,
 If to the future aught of good must come
 Sounder and therefore holier than the ends
 Which, in the giddiness of self applause,
 We covet as supreme. O grant the crown
 That Wisdom wears, or take his treacherous staff
 From Knowledge!—If the Muse, whom I have served
 This day, be mistress of a single pearl
 Fit to be placed in that pure diadem;
 Then, not in vain, under these chesnut boughs
 Reclined, shall I have yielded up my soul
 To transports from the secondary founts
 Flowing of time and place, and paid to both
 Due homage; nor shall fruitlessly have striven,
 By love of beauty moved, to enshrine in verse
 Accordant meditations, which in times

Vexed and disordered, as our own, may shed
Influence, at least among a scattered few,
To soberness of mind and peace of heart
Friendly; as here to my repose hath been
This flowering broom's dear neighbourhood, the light
And murmur issuing from yon pendent flood,
And all the varied landscape. Let us now
Rise, and to-morrow greet magnificent Rome.

Near Rome, in sight of St. Peter's

LONG has the dew been dried on tree and lawn;
L O'er man and beast a not unwelcome boon
Is shed, the languor of approaching noon;
To shady rest withdrawing or withdrawn
Mute are all creatures, as this couchant fawn,
Save insect-swarms that hum in air afloat,
Save that the Cock is crowing, a shrill note,
Startling and shrill as that which roused the dawn.
Heard in that hour, or when, as now, the nerve
Shrinks from the voice as from a mis-timed thing,
Oft for a holy warning may it serve,
Charged with remembrance of his sudden sting,
His bitter tears, whose name the Papal Chair
And yon resplendent Church are proud to bear.

At Florence

UNDER the shadow of a stately Pile,
The dome of Florence, pensive and alone,
Nor giving heed to aught that passed the while,
I stood, and gazed upon a marble stone,
The laurelled Dante's favourite seat. A throne,
In just esteem, it rivals; though no style
Be there of decoration to beguile
The mind, depressed by thought of greatness flown.
As a true man, who long had served the lyre,
I gazed with earnestness, and dared no more.
But in his breast the mighty Poet bore

A Patriot's heart, warm with undying fire.
Bold with the thought, in reverence I sate down,
And, for a moment, filled that empty Throne.

At Florence—from Michael Angelo

ETERNAL Lord! eased of a cumbrous load,
And loosened from the world, I turn to Thee;
Shun, like a shattered bark, the storm, and flee
To thy protection for a safe abode.
The crown of thorns, hands pierced upon the tree,
The meek, benign, and lacerated face,
To a sincere repentance promise grace,
To the sad soul give hope of pardon free.
With justice mark not Thou, O Light divine,
My fault, nor hear it with thy sacred ear;
Neither put forth that way thy arm severe;
Wash with thy blood my sins; thereto incline
More readily the more my years require
Help, and forgiveness speedy and entire.

Composed [at Rydal]

ON MAY-MORNING, 1838

IF with old love of you, dear Hills! I share
New love of many a rival image brought
From far, forgive the wanderings of my thought:
Nor art thou wrong'd, sweet May! when I compare
Thy present birth-morn with thy last, so fair,
So rich to me in favours. For my lot
Then was, within the famed Egerian Grot
To sit and muse, fanned by its dewy air
Mingling with thy soft breath! That morning, too,
Warblers I heard their joy unbosoming
Amid the sunny, shadowy, Colyseum;
Heard them, unchecked by aught of sombre hue,
For victories there won by flower-crowned Spring,
Chant in full choir their innocent TE DEUM.

ECCLESIASTICAL SKETCHES

Ecclesiastical Sketches, 1822, were prefaced by this Advertisement:

During the month of December, 1820, I accompanied a much-loved and honoured Friend in a walk through different parts of his Estate, with a view to fix upon the Site of a New Church which he intended to erect. It was one of the most beautiful mornings of a mild season,—our feelings were in harmony with the cherishing influences of the scene; and, such being our purpose, we were naturally led to look back upon past events with wonder and gratitude, and on the future with hope. Not long afterwards, some of the Sonnets which will be found towards the close of this Series, were produced as a private memorial of that morning's occupation.

The Catholic Question, which was agitated in Parliament about that time, kept my thoughts in the same course; and it struck me, that certain points in the Ecclesiastical History of our Country might advantageously be presented to view in Verse. Accordingly I took up the subject, and what I now offer to the Reader, was the result.

When this work was far advanced, I was agreeably surprized to find that my Friend, Mr. Southey, was engaged, with similar views, in writing a concise History of the Church *in* England. If our Productions, thus unintentionally coinciding, shall be found to illustrate each other, it will prove a high gratification to me, which I am sure my Friend will participate.

W. WORDSWORTH.

Rydal Mount,
January 24th, 1822.

Of the eighteen sonnets from the series printed here, sixteen were published in 1822, *Sacrament* in 1827, and "*Deplorable his lot*" in 1835.

ECCLESIASTICAL SKETCHES

Introduction

I, who descended with glad step to chase
Cerulean Duddon from his cloud-fed spring,
And of my wild Companion dared to sing,
In verse that moved with strictly-measured pace;
I, who essayed the nobler Stream to trace
Of Liberty, and smote the plausible string
'Till the checked Torrent, fiercely combating,
In victory found her natural resting-place;
Now seek upon the heights of Time the source
Of a holy River, on whose banks are found
Sweet pastoral flowers, and laurels that have crowned
Full oft the unworthy brow of lawless force;
Where, for delight of him who tracks its course,
Immortal amaranth and palms abound.

Conjectures

IF there be Prophets on whose spirits rest
Past things, revealed like future, they can tell
What Powers, presiding o'er the sacred Well
Of Christian Faith, this savage Island bless'd
With its first bounty. Wandering through the West,
Did holy Paul a while in Britain dwell,
And call the Fountain forth by miracle,
And with dread signs the nascent Stream invest?
Or He, whose bonds dropp'd off, whose prison doors
Flew open, by an Angel's voice unbarred?
Or some, of humbler name, to these wild shores
Storm-driven, who having seen the cup of woe
Pass from their Master, sojourned here to guard
The precious current they had taught to flow?

Monastery of Old Bangor

*THE oppression of the tumult—wrath and scorn—
 The tribulation—and the gleaming blades—*
 Such is the impetuous spirit that pervades
 The song of Taliesin;¹—Our's shall mourn
 The *unarmed* Host who by their prayers would turn
 The sword from Bangor's walls, and guard the store
 Of Aboriginal and Roman lore,
 And Christian monuments, that now must burn
 To senseless ashes. Mark! how all things swerve
 From their known course, or pass away like steam;
 Another language spreads from coast to coast;
 Only perchance some melancholy Stream
 And some indignant Hills old names preserve,
 When laws, and creeds, and people, all are lost!

Casual Incitement

A BRIGHT-HAIRED company of youthful Slaves,
 Beautiful strangers, stand within the pale
 Of a sad market, ranged for public sale,
 Where Tiber's stream the glorious City laves:
 ANGLI by name; and not an Angel waves
 His wing who seemeth lovelier in Heaven's eye
 Than they appear to holy Gregory,
 Who, having learnt that name, salvation craves
 For Them, and for their Land. The earnest Sire,
 His questions urging, feels in slender ties
 Of chiming sound commanding sympathies;
 De-irians—he would save them from God's ire;
 Subjects of Saxon ÆLLA—they shall sing
 Glad Hallelujahs to the eternal King!

¹ Taliesin was present at the battle which preceded this desolation.

DEPLORABLE his lot who tills the ground,
 His whole life long tills it, with heartless toil
 Of villain-service, passing with the soil
 To each new Master, like a steer or hound,
 Or like a rooted tree, or stone earth-bound;
 But, mark how gladly, through their own domains,
 The Monks relax or break these iron chains;
 While Mercy, uttering, through their voice, a sound
 Echoed in Heaven, cries out, "Ye Chiefs, abate
 These legalized oppressions! Man, whose name
 And nature God disdained not; Man, whose soul
 Christ died for, cannot forfeit his high claim
 To live and move exempt from all controul
 Which fellow-feeling doth not mitigate!"

Transubstantiation

ENOUGH! for see, with dim association
 The tapers burn; the odorous incense feeds
 A greedy flame; the pompous mass proceeds;
 The Priest bestows the appointed consecration;
 And, while the Host is raised, its elevation
 An awe and supernatural horror breeds,
 And all the People bow their heads like reeds,
 To a soft breeze, in lowly adoration.
 This Valdo brook'd not. On the banks of Rhone
 He taught, till persecution chased him thence,
 To adore the Invisible, and Him alone.
 Nor were his Followers loth to seek defence,
 'Mid woods and wilds, on Nature's craggy throne,
 From rites that trample upon soul and sense.

Dissolution of the Monasteries

THREATS come which no submission may assuage;
 No sacrifice avert, no power dispute;
 The tapers shall be quenched, the belfries mute,
 And, 'mid their choirs unroofed by selfish rage,
 The warbling wren shall find a leafy cage;
 The gadding bramble hang her purple fruit;
 And the green lizard and the gilded newt
 Lead unmolested lives, and die of age.
 The Owl of evening, and the woodland Fox
 For their abode the shrines of Waltham chuse:
 Proud Glastonbury can no more refuse
 To stoop her head before these desperate shocks—
 She whose high pomp displaced, as story tells,
 Arimathean Joseph's wattled cells.

The Virgin

MOTHER! whose virgin bosom was uncrosth
 With the least shade of thought to sin allied;
 Woman! above all women glorified,
 Our tainted nature's solitary boast;
 Purer than foam on central Ocean tost;
 Brighter than eastern skies at day-break strewn
 With fancied roses, than the unblemished moon
 Before her wane begins on heaven's blue coast;
 Thy Image falls to earth. Yet some, I ween,
 Not unforgiven the suppliant knee might bend,
 As to a visible Power, in which did blend
 All that was mixed and reconciled in Thee
 Of mother's love with maiden purity,
 Of high with low, celestial with terrenel

Translation of the Bible

BUT, to outweigh all harm, the sacred Book,
 In dusty sequestration wrapp'd too long,
 Assumes the accents of our native tongue;
 And he who guides the plough, or wields the crook,
 With understanding spirit now may look
 Upon her records, listen to her song,
 And sift her laws—much wondering that the wrong,
 Which Faith has suffered, Heaven could calmly brook.
 Transcendent Boon! noblest that earthly King
 Ever bestowed to equalize and bless
 Under the weight of mortal wretchedness!
 But passions spread like plagues, and thousands wild
 With bigotry shall tread the Offering
 Beneath their feet—detested and defiled.

Cranmer

OUTSTRETCHING flame-ward his upbraiding hand
 (O God of mercy may no earthly Seat
 Of judgment such presumptuous doom repeat!)
 Amid the shuddering throng doth Cranmer stand;
 Firm as the stake to which with iron band
 His Frame is tied; firm from the naked feet
 To the bare head, the victory complete;
 The shrouded Body, to the Soul's command,
 Answering with more than Indian fortitude,
 Through all her nerves with finer sense endued;
 Now wrapt in flames—and now in smoke embowered—
 'Till self-reproach and panting aspirations
 Are, with the heart that held them, all devoured;
 The Spirit set free, and crown'd with joyful acclamations!

Laud

PURSUED by Hate, debarred from friendly care;
 An old weak Man for vengeance thrown aside,
 Long "in the painful art of dying" tried,
 (Like a poor Bird entangled in a Snare
 Whose heart still flutters, though his wings forbear
 To stir in useless struggle) Laud relied
 Upon the strength which Innocence supplied,
 And in his prison breathes celestial air.
 Why tarries then thy Chariot? Wherefore stay,
 O Death! the ensanguined yet triumphant wheels,
 Which thou prepar'st, full often, to convey,
 (What time a State with madding faction reels)
 The Saint or Patriot to the world that heals
 All wounds, all perturbations doth allay?

Walton's Book of "Lives"

THERE are no colours in the fairest sky
 So fair as these. The feather whence the pen
 Was shaped that traced the lives of these good Men,
 Dropped from an Angel's wing. With moistened eye
 We read of faith and purest charity
 In Statesman, Priest, and humble Citizen.
 O, could we copy their mild virtues, then
 What joy to live, what blessedness to die!
 Methinks their very Names shine still and bright,
 Apart—like glow-worms in the woods of spring,
 Or lonely tapers shooting far a light
 That guides and cheers,—or seen, like stars on high,
 Satellites burning in a lucid ring
 Around meek Walton's heavenly memory.

The Liturgy

YES, if the intensities of hope and fear
 Attract us still, and passionate exercise
 Of lofty thoughts, the way before us lies
 Distinct with signs—through which, in fixed career,
 As through a zodiac, moves the ritual year
 Of England's Church—stupendous mysteries!
 Which whoso travels in her bosom, eyes
 As he approaches them, with solemn cheer.
 Enough for us to cast a transient glance
 The circle through; relinquishing its story
 For those whom Heaven hath fitted to advance
 And, harp in hand, rehearse the King of Glory—
 From his mild advent till his countenance
 Shall dissipate the seas and mountains hoary.

Sacrament

BY chain yet stronger must the Soul be tied:
 One duty more, last stage of this ascent,
 Brings to thy food, memorial Sacrament!
 The Offspring, haply at the Parents' side;
 But not till They, with all that do abide
 In Heaven, have lifted up their hearts to laud
 And magnify the glorious name of God,
 Fountain of Grace, whose Son for Sinners died.
 Here must my Song in timid reverence pause:
 But shrink not ye whom to the saving rite
 The Altar calls; come early under laws
 That can secure for you a path of light
 Through gloomiest shade; put on (nor dread its weight)
 Armour divine, and conquer in your cause!

Mutability

FROM low to high doth dissolution climb,
 And sinks from high to low, along a scale
 Of awful notes, whose concord shall not fail;
 A musical but melancholy chime,
 Which they can hear who meddle not with crime,
 Nor avarice, nor over-anxious care.
 Truth fails not; but her outward forms that bear
 The longest date do melt like frosty rime,
 That in the morning whitened hill and plain
 And is no more; drop like the tower sublime
 Of yesterday, which royally did wear
 Its crown of weeds, but could not even sustain
 Some casual shout that broke the silent air,
 Or the unimaginable touch of Time.

Old Abbies

MONASTIC Domes! following my downward way,
 Untouched by due regret I marked your fall!
 Now, ruin, beauty, ancient stillness, all
 Dispose to judgments temperate as we lay
 On our past selves in life's declining day:
 For as, by discipline of Time made wise,
 We learn to tolerate the infirmities
 And faults of others, gently as he may
 Towards our own the mild Instructor deals,
 Teaching us to forget them or forgive.
 Perversely curious, then, for hidden ill
 Why should we break Time's charitable seals?
 Once ye were holy, ye are holy still;
 Your spirit freely let me drink and live!

Inside of King's College Chapel, Cambridge

TAX not the royal Saint with vain expence,
 With ill-matched aims the Architect who planned,
 Albeit labouring for a scanty band
 Of white-robed Scholars only, this immense
 And glorious Work of fine Intelligence!
 Give all thou canst; high Heaven rejects the lore
 Of nicely-calculated less or more;
 So deemed the Man who fashioned for the sense
 These lofty pillars—spread that branching roof
 Self-poised, and scooped into ten thousand cells,
 Where light and shade repose, where music dwells
 Linger—*and* wandering on as loth to die,
 Like thoughts whose very sweetness yieldeth proof
 That they were born for immortality.

Conclusion

WHY sleeps the future, as a snake enrolled,
 Coil within coil, at noon-tide? For the Word
 Yields, if with unpresumptuous faith explored,
 Power at whose touch the sluggard shall unfold
 His drowsy rings. Look forth! that Stream behold,
 That Stream upon whose bosom we have pass'd
 Floating at ease while nations have effaced
 Nations, and Death has gathered to his fold
 Long lines of mighty Kings—look forth, my Soul!
 (Nor in this vision be thou slow to trust)
 The living Waters, less and less by guilt
 Stained and polluted, brighten as they roll,
 Till they have reached the Eternal City—built
 For the perfected Spirits of the just!

LONG MEG AND HER DAUGHTERS
SCORN NOT THE SONNET: CRITIC YOU HAVE FROWNED

TO —

TO A SKY-LARK

Long Meg and her Daughters was written in 1821 and published in *A Description of the Scenery of the Lakes*, 1822.

"*Scorn not the Sonnet*", "composed, almost extempore, in a short walk on the western side of Rydal Lake," was published in 1827.

To ——— was written in 1824 and published in 1827. The Fenwick Note says that it was "prompted by the undue importance attached to personal beauty by some dear friends of mine." The quotations are from Spenser's *Hymn in Honour of Beauty*.

To a Sky-lark was written in 1825 and published in 1827.

[THE MONUMENT COMMONLY CALLED
Long Meg and her Daughters,
NEAR THE RIVER EDEN]

A WEIGHT of awe not easy to be borne
Fell suddenly upon my spirit, cast
From the dread bosom of the unknown past,
When first I saw that family forlorn;—
And her, whose strength and stature seems to scorn
The power of years—pre-eminent, and placed
Apart, to overlook the circle vast.
Speak, Giant-mother! tell it to the Morn,
While she dispels the cumbrous shades of night;
Let the Moon hear, emerging from a cloud,
When, how, and wherefore, rose on British ground
That wond'rous Monument, whose mystic round
Forth shadows, some have deem'd, to mortal sight
The inviolable God that tames the proud.

SCORN not the Sonnet; Critic, you have frowned,
Mindless of its just honours;—with this key
Shakespeare unlocked his heart; the melody
Of this small Lute gave ease to Petrarch's wound;
A thousand times this Pipe did Tasso sound;
Camöens soothed with it an Exile's grief;
The Sonnet glittered a gay myrtle Leaf
Amid the cypress with which Dante crowned
His visionary brow: a glow-worm Lamp,
It cheered mild Spenser, called from Faery-land
To struggle through dark ways; and when a damp
Fell round the path of Milton, in his hand
The Thing became a Trumpet, whence he blew
Soul-animating strains—alas, too few!

To — —

Look at the fate of summer Flowers,
Which blow at daybreak, droop ere even-song;
And, grieved for their brief date, confess that ours,
Measured by what we are and ought to be,
Measured by all that trembling we foresee,
Is not so long!

If human Life do pass away,
Perishing yet more swiftly than the Flower,
Whose frail existence is but of a day;
What space hath Virgin's Beauty to disclose
Her sweets, and triumph o'er the breathing Rose?
Not even an hour!

The deepest grove whose foliage hid
The happiest Lovers Arcady might boast,
Could not the entrance of this thought forbid:
O be thou wise as they, soul-gifted Maid!
Nor rate too high what must so quickly fade,
So soon be lost.

Then shall Love teach some virtuous Youth
"To draw, out of the Object of his eyes,"
The whilst on Thee they gaze in simple truth,
Hues more exalted, "a refined Form,"
That dreads not age, nor suffers from the worm,
And never dies.

To a Sky-lark

ETHEREAL Minstrel! Pilgrim of the sky!
Dost thou despise the earth where cares abound?
Or, while the wings aspire, are heart and eye
Both with thy nest upon the dewy ground?
Thy nest which thou canst drop into at will,
Those quivering wings composed, that music still!

TO A SKY-LARK

To the last point of vision, and beyond,
Mount, daring Warbler! that love-prompted strain
('Twixt thee and thine a never-failing bond)
Thrills not the less the bosom of the plain:
Yet might'st thou seem, proud privilege! to sing
All independent of the leafy spring.

Leave to the Nightingale her shady wood;
A privacy of glorious light is thine;
Whence thou dost pour upon the world a flood
Of harmony, with rapture more divine;
Type of the wise who soar, but never roam;
True to the kindred points of Heaven and Home!

EVENING VOLUNTARIES

The *Ode Composed upon an Evening of Extraordinary Splendor and Beauty*, was written in 1817 and published in 1820. All the other poems in this section were written between 1832 and 1834 and published in 1835.

EVENING VOLUNTARIES

Ode

COMPOSED UPON AN EVENING OF EXTRAORDINARY
SPLENDOR AND BEAUTY

I

HAD this effulgence disappeared
With flying haste, I might have sent
Among the speechless clouds a look
Of blank astonishment;
But 'tis endued with power to stay,
And sanctify one closing day,
That frail Mortality may see,
What is?—ah no, but what *can* be!
Time was when field and watery cove
With modulated echoes rang,
While choirs of fervent Angels sang
Their vespers in the grove;
Or, ranged like stars along some sovereign height,
Warbled, for heaven above and earth below,
Strains suitable to both.—Such holy rite,
Methinks, if audibly repeated now
From hill or valley, could not move
Sublimier transport, purer love,
Than doth this silent spectacle—the gleam—
The shadow—and the peace supreme!

II

No sound is uttered,—but a deep
And solemn harmony pervades
The hollow vale from steep to steep,
And penetrates the glades.
Far-distant images draw nigh,
Call'd forth by wond'rous potency
Of beamy radiance, that imbues
Whate'er it strikes, with gem-like hues!
In vision exquisitely clear,
Herds range along the mountain side;

And glistening antlers are descried;
 And gilded flocks appear.
 Thine is the tranquil hour, purpureal Eve!
 But long as god-like wish, or hope divine,
 Informs my spirit, ne'er can I believe
 That this magnificence is wholly thine!
 —From worlds not quickened by the sun
 A portion of the gift is won;
 An intermingling of Heaven's pomp is spread
 On ground which British shepherds tread!

III

And, if there be whom broken ties
 Afflict, or injuries assail,
 Yon hazy ridges to their eyes,
 Present a glorious scale,
 Climbing suffused with sunny air,
 To stop—no record hath told where!
 And tempting fancy to ascend,
 And with immortal spirits blend!
 —Wings at my shoulders seem to play;
 But, rooted here, I stand and gaze
 On those bright steps that heaven-ward raise
 Their practicable way.
 Come forth, ye drooping old men, look abroad
 And see to what fair countries ye are bound!
 And if some Traveller, weary of his road,
 Hath slept since noon-tide on the grassy ground,
 Ye Genii! to his covert speed;
 And wake him with such gentle heed
 As may attune his soul to meet the dow'r
 Bestowed on this transcendent hour!

IV

Such hues from their celestial Urn
 Were wont to stream before my eye,
 Where'er it wandered in the morn
 Of blissful infancy.
 This glimpse of glory, why renewed?
 Nay, rather speak with gratitude;
 For, if a vestige of those gleams

Surviv'd, 'twas only in my dreams.
 Dread Power! whom peace and calmness serve
 No less than Nature's threatening voice,
 If aught unworthy be my choice,
 From THEE if I would swerve,
 O, let thy grace remind me of the light,
 Full early lost, and fruitlessly deplored;
 Which, at this moment, on my waking sight
 Appears to shine, by miracle restored!
 My soul, though yet confined to earth,
 Rejoices in a second birth;
 —'Tis past, the visionary splendour fades,
 And Night approaches with her shades.

Note. The multiplication of mountain-ridges, described, at the commencement of the third stanza of this Ode, as a kind of Jacob's Ladder, leading to Heaven, is produced either by watery vapours, or sunny haze,—in the present instance by the latter cause. See the account of the Lakes at the end of this volume [p. 700 in this book]. The reader, who is acquainted with the Author's Ode, intitled, "Intimations of Immortality, &c." will recognize the allusion to it that pervades the last stanza of the foregoing Poem.

CALM is the fragrant air, and loth to lose
 Day's grateful warmth, tho' moist with falling dews.
 Look for the stars, you'll say that there are none;
 Look up a second time, and, one by one,
 You mark them twinkling out with silvery light,
 And wonder how they could elude the sight.
 The birds, of late so noisy in their bowers,
 Warbled a while with faint and fainter powers,
 But now are silent as the dim-seen flowers:
 Nor does the Village Church-clock's iron tone
 The time's and season's influence disown;
 Nine beats distinctly to each other bound
 In drowsy sequence; how unlike the sound
 That, in rough winter, oft inflicts a fear
 On fireside Listeners, doubting what they hear!
 The Shepherd, bent on rising with the sun,
 Had closed his door before the day was done,
 And now with thankful heart to bed doth creep,
 And join his little Children in their sleep.

The Bat, lured forth where trees the lane o'ershade,
 Flits and reflits along the close arcade;
 Far-heard the Dor-hawk chases the white Moth
 With burring note, which Industry and Sloth
 Might both be pleased with, for it suits them both.
 Wheels and the tread of hoofs are heard no more;
 One Boat there was, but it will touch the shore
 With the next dipping of its slackened oar;
 Faint sound, that, for the gayest of the gay,
 Might give to serious thought a moment's sway,
 As a last token of Man's toilsome day!

[*On a High Part of the Coast of Cumberland*

Easter Sunday, April 7.

THE AUTHOR'S SIXTY-THIRD BIRTHDAY]

THE Sun, that seemed so mildly to retire,
 Flung back from distant climes a streaming fire,
 Whose blaze is now subdued to tender gleams,
 Prelude of night's approach with soothing dreams.
 Look round;—of all the clouds not one is moving;
 'Tis the still hour of thinking, feeling, loving.
 Silent, and stedfast as the vaulted sky,
 The boundless plain of waters seems to lie:—
 Comes that low sound from breezes rustling o'er
 The grass-crowned headland that conceals the shore?
 No, 'tis the earth-voice of the mighty sea,
 Whispering how meek and gentle he *can* be!

Thou Power supreme! who, arming to rebuke
 Offenders, dost put off the gracious look,
 And clothe thyself with terrors like the flood
 Of ocean roused into his fiercest mood,
 Whatever discipline thy Will ordain
 For the brief course that must for me remain;
 Teach me with quick-eared spirit to rejoice

In admonitions of thy softest voice!
 Whate'er the path these mortal feet may trace,
 Breathe through my soul the blessing of thy grace,
 Glad, through a perfect love, a faith sincere
 Drawn from the wisdom that begins with fear;
 Glad to expand; and, for a season, free
 From finite cares, to rest absorbed in Thee!

By the Sea-side

THE sun is couched, the sea-fowl gone to rest,
 And the wild storm hath somewhere found a nest;
 Air slumbers—wave with wave no longer strives,
 Only a heaving of the deep survives,
 A tell-tale motion! soon will it be laid,
 And by the tide alone the water swayed.
 Stealthy withdrawals, interminglings mild
 Of light with shade in beauty reconciled—
 Such is the prospect far as sight can range,
 The soothing recompence, the welcome change.
 Where now the ships that drove before the blast,
 Threatened by angry breakers as they passed;
 And by a train of flying clouds bemocked;
 Or, in the hollow surge, at anchor rocked
 As on a bed of death? Some lodge in peace,
 Saved by His care who bade the tempest cease;
 And some, too heedless of past danger, court
 Fresh gales to waft them to the far-off port;
 But near, or hanging sea and sky between,
 Not one of all those wingèd Powers is seen,
 Seen in her course, nor 'mid this quiet heard;
 Yet oh! how gladly would the air be stirred
 By some acknowledgment of thanks and praise,
 Soft in its temper as those vesper lays
 Sung to the Virgin while accordant oars
 Urge the slow bark along Calabrian shores;
 A sea-born service through the mountains felt
 Till into one loved vision all things melt:
 Or like those hymns that soothe with graver sound

EVENING VOLUNTARIES

The gulfy coast of Norway iron-bound;
And, from the wide and open Baltic, rise
With punctual care, Lutheran harmonies.
Hush, not a voice is here! but why repine,
Now when the star of eve comes forth to shine
On British waters with that look benign?
Ye mariners, that plough your onward way,
Or in the haven rest, or sheltering bay,
May *silent* thanks at least to God be given
With a full heart, "our thoughts are heard in heaven!"

By the Side of Rydal Mere

THE Linnet's warble, sinking towards a close,
Hints to the Thrush 'tis time for their repose;
The shrill-voiced Thrush is heedless, and again
The Monitor revives his own sweet strain;
But both will soon be mastered, and the copse
Be left as silent as the mountain-tops,
Ere some commanding Star dismiss to rest
The throng of Rooks, that now, from twig or nest,
(After a steady flight on home-bound wings,
And a last game of mazy hoverings
Around their ancient grove) with cawing noise
Disturb the liquid music's equipoise.
O Nightingale! Who ever heard thy song
Might here be moved, till Fancy grows so strong
That listening sense is pardonably cheated
Where wood or stream by thee was never greeted.
Surely, from fairest spots of favoured lands,
Were not some gifts withheld by jealous hands,
This hour of deepening darkness here would be
As a fresh morning for new harmony;
And Lays as prompt would hail the dawn of night;
A *dawn* she has both beautiful and bright,
When the East kindles with the full moon's light.

Wanderer by spring with gradual progress led,
For sway profoundly felt as widely spread;

To king, to peasant, to rough sailor, dear,
 And to the soldier's trumpet-wearied ear;
 How welcome wouldst thou be to this green Vale
 Fairer than Tempe! Yet, sweet Nightingale!
 From the warm breeze that bears thee on alight
 At will, and stay thy migratory flight;
 Build, at thy choice, or sing, by pool or fount,
 Who shall complain, or call thee to account?
 The wisest, happiest, of our kind are they
 That ever walk content with Nature's way,
 God's goodness measuring bounty as it may;
 For whom the gravest thought of what they miss,
 Chastening the fulness of a present bliss,
 Is with that wholesome office satisfied,
 While unrepining sadness is allied
 In thankful bosoms to a modest pride.

SOFT as a cloud is yon blue Ridge—the Mere
 Seems firm as solid crystal, breathless, clear,
 And motionless; and, to the gazer's eye,
 Deeper than Ocean, in the immensity
 Of its vague mountains and unreal sky!
 But, from the process in that still retreat,
 Turn to minuter changes at our feet;
 Observe how dewy Twilight has withdrawn
 The crowd of daisies from the shaven lawn,
 And has restored to view its tender green,
 That, while the sun rode high, was lost beneath their
 dazzling sheen.

—An emblem this of what the sober Hour
 Can do for minds disposed to feel its power!
 Thus oft, when we in vain have wish'd away
 The petty pleasures of the garish day,
 Meek Eve shuts up the whole usurping host
 (Unbashful dwarfs each glittering at his post)
 And leaves the disencumbered spirit free
 To reassume a staid simplicity.

EVENING VOLUNTARIES

'Tis well—but what are helps of time and place,
When wisdom stands in need of nature's grace;
Why do good thoughts, invoked or not, descend,
Like Angels from their bowers, our virtues to befriend;
If yet To-morrow, unbelied, may say,
"I come to open out, for fresh display,
The elastic vanities of yesterday?"

THE leaves that rustled on this oak-crowned hill,
And sky that danced among those leaves, are still;
Rest smooths the way for sleep; in field and bower
Soft shades and dewes have shed their blended power
On drooping eyelid and the closing flower;
Sound is there none at which the faintest heart
Might leap, the weakest nerve of superstition start;
Save when the Owlet's unexpected scream
Pierces the ethereal vault; and 'mid the gleam
Of unsubstantial imagery—the dream,
From the hushed vale's realities, transferred
To the still lake, the imaginative Bird
Seems, 'mid inverted mountains, not unheard.

Grave Creature! whether, while the moon shines bright
On thy wings opened wide for smoothest flight,
Thou art discovered in a roofless tower,
Rising from what may once have been a Lady's bower:
Or spied where thou sit'st moping in thy mew
At the dim centre of a churchyard yew;
Or, from a rifted crag or ivy tod
Deep in a forest, thy secure abode,
Thou giv'st, for pastime's sake, by shriek or shout,
A puzzling notice of thy whereabouts;
May the night never come, the day be seen,
When I shall scorn thy voice or mock thy mien!

EVENING VOLUNTARIES

In classic ages men perceived a soul
Of sapience in thy aspect, headless Owl!
Thee Athens revered in the studious grove;
And, near the golden sceptre grasped by Jove,
His Eagle's favourite perch, while round him sate
The Gods revolving the decrees of Fate,
Thou, too, wert present at Minerva's side—
Hark to that second larum! far and wide
The elements have heard, and rock and cave replied.

A JEWISH FAMILY
ON THE POWER OF SOUND

A Jewish Family was written in July 1828 and published in 1835. The occasion is described in the Fenwick Note:

Coleridge, my daughter, and I, in 1828, passed a fortnight upon the banks of the Rhine, principally under the hospitable roof of Mr. Aders of Gotesburg, but two days of the time we spent at St. Goar in rambles among the neighbouring vallies. It was at St. Goar that I saw the Jewish family here described. Though exceedingly poor, and in rags, they were not less beautiful than I have endeavoured to make them appear. We had taken a little dinner with us in a basket, and invited them to partake of it, which the mother refused to do, both for herself and children, saying it was with them a fast-day; adding diffidently, that whether such observances were right or wrong, she felt it her duty to keep them strictly.

On the Power of Sound was written in 1828-9 and published in 1835.

A Jewish Family

(IN A SMALL VALLEY OPPOSITE ST. GOAR,
UPON THE RHINE)

GENIUS of Raphael! if thy wings
Might bear thee to this glen,
With faithful memory left of things
To pencil dear and pen,
Thou wouldst forego the neighbouring Rhine,
And all his majesty,
A studious forehead to incline
O'er this poor family.

The Mother—her thou must have seen,
In spirit, ere she came
To dwell these rifted rocks between,
Or found on earth a name;
An image, too, of that sweet Boy,
Thy inspirations give:
Of playfulness, and love, and joy,
Predestined here to live.

Downcast, or shooting glances far,
How beautiful his eyes,
That blend the nature of the star
With that of summer skies!
I speak as if of sense beguiled;
Uncounted months are gone,
Yet am I with the Jewish Child,
That exquisite Saint John.

I see the dark brown curls, the brow,
The smooth transparent skin,
Refined, as with intent to show
The holiness within;
The grace of parting Infancy
By blushes yet untamed;
Age faithful to the mother's knee,
Nor of her arms ashamed.

A JEWISH FAMILY

Two lovely Sisters, still and sweet
As flowers, stand side by side;
Their soul-subduing looks might cheat
The Christian of his pride:
Such beauty hath the Eternal poured
Upon them not forlorn,
Though of a lineage once abhorred,
Nor yet redeemed from scorn.

Mysterious safeguard, that, in spite
Of poverty and wrong,
Doth here preserve a living light,
From Hebrew fountains sprung;
That gives this ragged group to cast
Around the dell a gleam
Of Palestine, of glory past,
And proud Jerusalem!

On the Power of Sound

ARGUMENT

The Ear addressed, as occupied by a spiritual functionary, in communion with sounds, individual, or combined in studied harmony.—Sources and effects of those sounds (to the close of 6th Stanza).—The power of music, whence proceeding, exemplified in the idiot.—Origin of music, and its effect in early ages—how produced (to the middle of 10th Stanza).—The mind recalled to sounds acting casually and severally.—Wish uttered (11th Stanza) that these could be united into a scheme or system for moral interests and intellectual contemplation.—(Stanza 12th.) The Pythagorean theory of numbers and music, with their supposed power over the motions of the universe—imagination consonant with such a theory.—Wish expressed (in 11th Stanza) realized, in some degree, by the representation of all sounds under the form of thanksgiving to the Creator.—(Last Stanza) the destruction of earth and the planetary system—the survival of audible harmony, and its support in the Divine Nature, as revealed in Holy Writ.

1.

THY functions are etherial,
As if within thee dwelt a glancing Mind,
Organ of vision! And a Spirit aerial
Informs the cell of hearing, dark and blind;
Intricate labyrinth, more dread for thought

To enter than oracular cave;
 Strict passage, through which sighs are brought,
 And whispers, for the heart, their slave;
 And shrieks, that revel in abuse
 Of shivering flesh; and warbled air,
 Whose piercing sweetness can unloose
 The chains of frenzy, or entice a smile
 Into the ambush of despair;
 Hosannas pealing down the long-drawn aisle,
 And requiems answered by the pulse that beats
 Devoutly, in life's last retreats!

2.

The headlong Streams and Fountains
 Serve Thee, Invisible Spirit, with untired powers;
 Cheering the wakeful Tent on Syrian mountains,
 They lull perchance ten thousand thousand flowers.
That roar, the prowling Lion's *Here I am*,
 How fearful to the desert wide!
 That bleat, how tender! of the Dam
 Calling a straggler to her side.
 Shout, Cuckoo! let the vernal soul
 Go with thee to the frozen zone;
 Toll from thy loftiest perch, lone Bell-bird, toll!
 At the still hour to Mercy dear,
 Mercy from her twilight throne
 Listening to Nun's faint sob of holy fear,
 To Sailor's prayer breathed from a darkening sea,
 Or Widow's cottage lullaby.

3.

Ye Voices, and ye Shadows,
 And Images of voice—to hound and horn
 From rocky steep and rock-bestudded meadows
 Flung back, and, in the sky's blue caves, reborn,
 On with your pastime! till the church-tower bells
 A greeting give of *measured* glee;
 And milder echoes from their cells
 Repeat the bridal symphony.
 Then, or far earlier, let us rove
 Where mists are breaking up or gone,

ON THE POWER OF SOUND

And from aloft look down into a cove
Besprinkled with a careless quire,
Happy Milk-maids, one by one
Scattering a ditty each to her desire,
A liquid concert matchless by nice Art,
A stream as if from one full heart.

4.

Blest be the song that brightens
The blind Man's gloom, exalts the Veteran's mirth;
Unscorned the Peasant's whistling breath, that lightens
His duteous toil of furrowing the green earth.
For the tired Slave, Song lifts the languid oar,
And bids it aptly fall, with chime
That beautifies the fairest shore,
And mitigates the harshest clime.
Yon Pilgrims see—in lagging file
They move; but soon the appointed way
A choral *Ave Marie* shall beguile,
And to their hope the distant shrine
Glisten with a livelier ray:
Nor friendless He, the Prisoner of the Mine,
Who from the well-spring of his own clear breast
Can draw, and sing his griefs to rest.

5.

When civic renovation
Dawns on a kingdom, and for needful haste
Best eloquence avails not, Inspiration
Mounts with a tune, that travels like a blast
Piping through cave and battlemented tower;
Then starts the Sluggard, pleased to meet
That voice of Freedom, in its power
Of promises, shrill, wild, and sweet!
Who, from a martial *pageant*, spreads
Incitements of a battle-day,
Thrilling the unweaponed crowd with plumeless
heads;
Even She whose Lydian airs inspire
Peaceful striving, gentle play
Of timid hope and innocent desire

Shot from the dancing Graces, as they move
Fanned by the plausive wings of Love.

6.

How oft along thy mazes,
Regent of Sound, have dangerous Passions trod!
O Thou, through whom the Temple rings with praises,
And blackening clouds in thunder speak of God,
Betray not by the cozenage of sense
Thy Votaries, wooingly resigned
To a voluptuous influence
That taints the purer, better mind;
But lead sick Fancy to a harp
That hath in noble tasks been tried;
And, if the Virtuous feel a pang too sharp,
Soothe it into patience,—stay
The uplifted arm of Suicide;
And let some mood of thine in firm array
Knit every thought the impending issue needs,
Ere Martyr burns, or Patriot bleeds!

7.

As Conscience, to the centre
Of Being, smites with irresistible pain,
So shall a solemn cadence, if it enter
The mouldy vaults of the dull Idiot's brain,
Transmute him to a wretch from quiet hurled—
Convulsed as by a jarring din;
And then aghast, as at the world
Of reason partially let in
By concords winding with a sway
Terrible for sense and soul!
Or, awed he weeps, struggling to quell dismay.
Point not these mysteries to an Art
Lodged above the starry pole;
Pure modulations flowing from the heart
Of divine Love, where Wisdom, Beauty, Truth
With Order dwell, in endless youth?

8.

Oblivion may not cover
All treasures hoarded by the Miser, Time.

Orphean Insight! Truth's undaunted Lover,
 To the first leagues of tutored passion climb,
 When Music deigned within this grosser sphere
 Her subtle essence to enfold,
 And Voice and Shell drew forth a tear
 Softer than Nature's self could mould.
 Yet *strenuous* was the infant Age:
 Art, daring because souls could feel,
 Stirred nowhere but an urgent equipage
 Of rapt imagination sped her march
 Through the realms of woe and weal:
 Hell to the lyre bowed low; the upper arch
 Rejoiced that clamorous spell and magic verse
 Her wan disasters could disperse.

9.

The GIFT to King Amphion
 That walled a city with its melody
 Was for belief no dream; thy skill, Arion!
 Could humanise the creatures of the sea,
 Where men were monsters. A last grace he craves,
 Leave for one chant;—the dulcet sound
 Steals from the deck o'er willing waves,
 And listening Dolphins gather round.
 Self-cast, as with a desperate course,
 'Mid that strange audience, he bestrides
 A proud One docile as a managed horse;
 And singing, while the accordant hand
 Sweeps his harp, the Master rides;
 So shall he touch at length a friendly strand,
 And he, with his Preserver, shine star-bright
 In memory, through silent night.

10.

The pipe of Pan, to Shepherds
 Couched in the shadow of Mænalian Pines,
 Was passing sweet; the eyeballs of the Leopards,
 That in high triumph drew the Lord of vines,
 How did they sparkle to the cymbal's clang!
 While Fauns and Satyrs beat the ground
 In cadence,—and Silenus swang

This way and that, with wild-flowers crowned.
 To life, to *life* give back thine Ear:
 Ye who are longing to be rid
 Of Fable, though to truth subservient, hear
 The little sprinkling of cold earth that fell
 Echoed from the coffin lid;
 The Convict's summons in the steeple knell.
 "The vain distress-gun," from a leeward shore,
 Repeated—heard, and heard no more!

11.

For terror, joy, or pity,
 Vast is the compass, and the swell of notes:
 From the Babe's first cry to voice of regal City,
 Rolling a solemn sea-like bass, that floats
 Far as the woodlands—with the trill to blend
 Of that shy Songstress, whose love-tale
 Might tempt an Angel to descend,
 While hovering o'er the moonlight vale.
 O for some soul-affecting scheme
 Of *moral* music, to unite
 Wanderers whose portion is the faintest dream
 Of memory!—O that they might stoop to bear
 Chains, such precious chains of sight
 As laboured minstrelsies through ages wear!
 O for a balance fit the truth to tell
 Of the Unsubstantial, pondered well!

12.

By one pervading Spirit
 Of tones and numbers all things are controlled,
 As Sages taught, where faith was found to merit
 Initiation in that mystery old.
 The Heavens, whose aspect makes our minds as still
 As they themselves *appear* to be,
 Innumerable voices fill
 With everlasting harmony;
 The towering Headlands, crowned with mist,
 Their feet among the billows, know
 That Ocean is a mighty harmonist;
 Thy pinions, universal Air,

ON THE POWER OF SOUND

Ever waving to and fro,
Are delegates of harmony, and bear
Strains that support the Seasons in their round;
Stern Winter loves a dirge-like sound.

13.

Break forth into thanksgiving,
Ye banded Instruments of wind and chords;
Unite, to magnify the Ever-living,
Your inarticulate notes with the voice of words!
Nor hushed be service from the lowing mead,
Nor mute the forest hum of noon;
Thou too be heard, lone Eagle! freed
From snowy peak and cloud, attune
Thy hungry barkings to the hymn
Of joy, that from her utmost walls
The six-day's Work, by flaming Seraphim,
Transmits to Heaven! As Deep to Deep
Shouting through one valley calls,
All worlds, all natures, mood and measure keep
For praise and ceaseless gratulation, poured
Into the ear of God, their Lord!

14.

A Voice to Light gave Being;
To Time, and Man his earth-born Chronicler;
A Voice shall finish doubt and dim foreseeing,
And sweep away life's visionary stir;
The Trumpet (we, intoxicate with pride,
Arm at its blast for deadly wars)
To archangelic lips applied,
The grave shall open, quench the stars.
O Silence! are Man's noisy years
No more than moments of thy life?
Is Harmony, blest Queen of smiles and tears,
With her smooth tones and discords just,
Tempered into rapturous strife,
Thy destined Bond-slave? No! though Earth be dust
And vanish, though the Heavens dissolve, her stay
Is in the Word, that shall not pass away.

EPITAPHS AND ELEGIAC PIECES

Elegiac Verses in Memory of my Brother were written in 1805 but not published until 1842.

Extempore Effusion upon the Death of James Hogg was written in November 1835, published in the *Athenaeum*, 12 December 1835 and in the *Poetical Works*, 1837. The Fenwick Note runs:

These verses were written extempore, immediately after reading a notice of the Ettrick Shepherd's death. . . . He was undoubtedly a man of original genius, but of coarse manners and low and offensive opinions. Of Coleridge and Lamb I need not speak here. Crabbe I have met in London at Mr. Rogers's, but more frequently and favorably at Mr. Hoare's upon Hampstead Heath.

"*Methought I saw the footsteps of a throne*" is transferred from *Poems in Two Volumes*, 1807, to preserve its relation to the succeeding sonnet, *November*, 1836, which was published in 1837. The Fenwick Note says:

The latter part of the first of these was a great favourite with my Sister Sara Hutchinson. When I saw her lying in death I could not resist the impulse to compose the sonnet that follows.

To the Memory of Raisley Calvert is also transferred from *Poems in Two Volumes*, 1807. Calvert died young of consumption in 1795. To his friend Wordsworth, who nursed him in his last illness, he left the sum of £900, which enabled Wordsworth to devote his life to poetry.

"*Surprized by joy—impatient as the Wind*" "was in fact suggested by my daughter Catharine long after her death" (4 June 1812). It was published in 1815.

On the Death of His Late Majesty [George III] was written and published in 1820.

A Grave-stone upon the Floor in the Cloisters of Worcester Cathedral was probably written in 1828. It was published in *The Keepsake*, 1829 and the *Poetical Works* of 1832.

Inscription for a Monument in Crosthwaite Church was written in December 1843 and published in 1845.

EPITAPHS AND ELEGIAC PIECES

Elegiac Verses

IN MEMORY OF MY BROTHER, JOHN WORDSWORTH

Commander of the E. I. Company's ship, the Earl of Abergavenny, in which he perished by calamitous shipwreck, Feb. 6th, 1805. Composed near the Mountain track, that leads from Grasmere through Grisdale Hawes, where it descends towards Patterdale.

I

THE Sheep-boy whistled loud, and lo!
That instant, startled by the shock,
The Buzzard mounted from the rock
Deliberate and slow:
Lord of the air, he took his flight;
Oh! could he on that woeful night
Have lent his wing, my Brother dear,
For one poor moment's space to Thee,
And all who struggled with the Sea,
When safety was so near.

II

Thus in the weakness of my heart
I spoke (but let that pang be still)
When rising from the rock at will,
I saw the Bird depart.
And let me calmly bless the Power
That meets me in this unknown Flower,
Affecting type of him I mourn!
With calmness suffer and believe,
And grieve, and know that I must grieve,
Not cheerless, though forlorn.

III

Here did we stop; and here looked round
While each into himself descends,
For that last thought of parting Friends
That is not to be found.
Hidden was Grasmere Vale from sight,
Our home and his, his heart's delight,

His quiet heart's selected home.
But time before him melts away,
And he hath feeling of a day
Of blessedness to come.

IV

Full soon in sorrow did I weep,
Taught that the mutual hope was dust,
In sorrow, but for higher trust,
How miserably deep!
All vanished in a single word,
A breath, a sound, and scarcely heard.
Sea—Ship—drowned—Shipwreck—so it came,
The meek, the brave, the good, was gone;
He who had been our living John
Was nothing but a name.

V

That was indeed a parting! oh,
Glad am I, glad that it is past;
For there were some on whom it cast
Unutterable woe.
But they as well as I have gains;—
From many a humble source, to pains
Like these, there comes a mild release;
Even here I feel it, even this Plant
Is in its beauty ministrant
To comfort and to peace.

VI

He would have loved thy modest grace,
Meek Flower! To Him I would have said,
"It grows upon its native bed
Beside our Parting-place;
There, cleaving to the ground, it lies
With multitude of purple eyes,
Spangling a cushion green like moss;
But we will see it, joyful tide!
Some day, to see it in its pride,
The mountain will we cross."¹

¹ The plant alluded to is the Moss Campion (*Silene acaulis*, of Linnæus).

VII

—Brother and friend, if verse of mine
 Have power to make thy virtues known,
 Here let a monumental Stone
 Stand—sacred as a Shrine;
 And to the few who pass this way,
 Traveller or Shepherd, let it say,
 Long as these mighty rocks endure,
 Oh do not Thou too fondly brood,
 Although deserving of all good,
 On any earthly hope, however pure!

*Extempore Effusion**Upon the Death of James Hogg*

WHEN first, descending from the moorlands,
 I saw the Stream of Yarrow glide
 Along a bare and open valley,
 The Ettrick Shepherd was my guide.

When last along its banks I wandered,
 Through groves that had begun to shed
 Their golden leaves upon the pathways,
 My steps the border minstrel led.

The mighty Minstrel breathes no longer,
 'Mid mouldering ruins low he lies;
 And death upon the braes of Yarrow,
 Has closed the Shepherd-poet's eyes:

Nor has the rolling year twice measured,
 From sign to sign, its stedfast course,
 Since every mortal power of Coleridge
 Was frozen at its marvellous source;

The 'rapt One, of the godlike forehead,
 The heaven-eyed creature sleeps in earth:
 And Lamb, the frolic and the gentle,
 Has vanished from his lonely hearth.

Like clouds that rake the mountain-summits,
Or waves that own no curbing hand,
How fast has brother followed brother,
From sunshine to the sunless land!

Yet I, whose lids from infant slumbers
Were earlier raised, remain to hear
A timid voice, that asks in whispers,
"Who next will drop and disappear?"

Our haughty life is crowned with darkness,
Like London with its own black wreath,
On which with thee, O Crabbe! forth-looking,
I gazed from Hampstead's breezy heath.

As if but yesterday departed,
Thou too art gone before; but why,
O'er ripe fruit, seasonably gathered,
Should frail survivors heave a sigh?

Mourn rather for that holy Spirit,
Sweet as the spring, as ocean deep;
For Her who, ere her summer faded,
Has sunk into a breathless sleep.

No more of old romantic sorrows,
For slaughtered Youth or love-lorn Maid!
With sharper grief is Yarrow smitten,
And Ettrick mourns with her their Poet dead.

Nov. 1835¹

METHOUGHT I saw the footsteps of a throne
Which mists and vapours from mine eyes did shroud,
Nor view of him who sate thereon allow'd;
But all the steps and ground about were strown

¹ Walter Scott died, 21st Sept. 1832.
S. T. Coleridge 25th July 1834.
Charles Lamb 27th Dec. 1834.
Geo. Crabbe 3rd Feb. 1832.
Felicia Hemans 16th May 1835.

With sights the ruefullest that flesh and bone
 Ever put on; a miserable crowd,
 Sick, hale, old, young, who cried before that cloud,
 "Thou art our king, O Death! to thee we groan."
 I seem'd to mount those steps; the vapours gave
 Smooth way; and I beheld the face of one
 Sleeping alone within a mossy cave,
 With her face up to heaven; that seem'd to have
 Pleasing remembrance of a thought foregone;
 A lovely Beauty in a summer grave!

November, 1836

EVEN so for me a Vision¹ sanctified
 The sway of Death; long ere mine eyes had seen
 Thy countenance—the still rapture of thy mien—
 When thou, dear Sister! wert become Death's Bride:
 No trace of pain or languor could abide
 That change:—age on thy brow was smoothed—thy cold
 Wan cheek at once was privileged to unfold
 A loveliness to living youth denied.
 Oh! if within me hope should e'er decline,
 The lamp of faith, lost Friend! too faintly burn;
 Then may that heaven-revealing smile of thine,
 The bright assurance, visibly return:
 And let my spirit in that power divine
 Rejoice, as, through that power, it ceased to mourn.

To the Memory of Raisley Calvert

CALVERT! it must not be unheard by them
 Who may respect my name that I to thee
 Ow'd many years of early liberty.
 This care was thine when sickness did condemn
 Thy youth to hopeless wasting, root and stem:
 That I, if frugal and severe, might stray
 Where'er I liked; and finally array
 My temples with the Muse's diadem.
 Hence, if in freedom I have lov'd the truth,
 If there be aught of pure, or good, or great,

¹ [See the poem above, "Methought I saw the footsteps of a throne."]

In my past verse; or shall be, in the lays
Of higher mood, which now I meditate,
It gladdens me, O worthy, short-lived Youth!
To think how much of this will be thy praise.

SURPRIZED by joy—impatient as the Wind
I wished to share the transport—Oh! with whom
But Thee, long buried in the silent Tomb,
That spot which no vicissitude can find?
Love, faithful love recalled thee to my mind—
But how could I forget thee?—Through what power,
Even for the least division of an hour,
Have I been so beguiled as to be blind
To my most grievous loss?—That thought's return
Was the worst pang that sorrow ever bore,
Save one, one only, when I stood forlorn,
Knowing my heart's best treasure was no more;
That neither present time, nor years unborn
Could to my sight that heavenly face restore.

On the Death of His Late Majesty

WARD of the LAW!—dread Shadow of a King!
Whose Realm had dwindled to one stately room:
Whose universe was gloom immers'd in gloom,
Darkness as thick as Life o'er Life could fling,
Yet haply cheered some faint glimmering
Of Faith and Hope; if thou by nature's doom
Gently hast sunk into the quiet tomb,
Why should we bend in grief, to sorrow cling,
When thankfulness were best?—Fresh-flowing tears,
Or, where tears flow not, sigh succeeding sigh,
Yield to such after-thought the sole reply
Which justly it can claim. The Nation hears
In this deep knell—silent for threescore years,
An unexampled voice of awful memory!

*A Grave-stone upon the floor in the Cloisters of
Worcester Cathedral*

“*MISERRIMUS!*” and neither name or date,
Prayer, text, or symbol, graven upon the stone;
Nought but that word assigned to the unknown,
That solitary word—to separate
From all, and cast a cloud around the fate
Of him who lies beneath. Most wretched one,
Who chose his Epitaph? Himself alone
Could thus have dared the grave to agitate,
And claim, among the dead, this awful crown;
Nor doubt that He marked also for his own,
Close to these cloistral steps a burial-place,
That every foot might fall with heavier tread,
Trampling upon his vileness. Stranger, pass
Softly!—To save the contrite, Jesus bled.

Inscription

FOR A MONUMENT IN CROSTHWAITE CHURCH,
IN THE VALE OF KESWICK

YE vales and hills whose beauty hither drew
The poet's steps, and fixed him here, on you,
His eyes have closed! And ye, lov'd books, no more
Shall Southey feed upon your precious lore,
To works that ne'er shall forfeit their renown,
Adding immortal labours of his own—
Whether he traced historic truth, with zeal
For the State's guidance, or the Church's weal,
Or Fancy, disciplined by studious art,
Inform'd his pen, or wisdom of the heart,
Or judgments sanctioned in the Patriot's mind
By reverence for the rights of all mankind.
Wide were his aims, yet in no human breast
Could private feelings meet for holier rest.

His joys, his griefs, have vanished like a cloud
From Skiddaw's top; but he to heaven was vowed
Through his industrious life, and Christian faith
Calmed in his soul the fear of change and death.

LAST POEMS

Airey-Force Valley was written in September 1836 and published in 1842.

"When Severn's sweeping flood had overthrown" was written and privately printed in 1842, but was not included in the edition of 1849-50. This text is taken from Knight's edition of the *Poetical Works* (1886).

"Forth from a jutting ridge" was written and published in 1845.

Illustrated Books and Newspapers was written in 1846 and published in 1850.

"How beautiful the Queen of Night, on high" was first published in 1850.

LAST POEMS

Airey-Force Valley

—NOT a breath of air
Ruffles the bosom of this leafy glen.
From the brook's margin, wide around, the trees
Are stedfast as the rocks; the brook itself,
Old as the hills that feed it from afar,
Doth rather deepen than disturb the calm
Where all things else are still and motionless.
And yet, even now, a little breeze, perchance
Escaped from boisterous winds that rage without,
Has entered, by the sturdy oaks unfelt;
But to its gentle touch how sensitive
Is the light ash! that, pendent from the brow
Of yon dim cave, in seeming silence makes
A soft eye-music of slow-waving boughs,
Powerful almost as vocal harmony
To stay the wanderer's steps and soothe his thoughts.

[In 1842 a bazaar was held in Cardiff Castle to raise funds for the building of a church. Wordsworth assisted by contributing this sonnet, which was printed and sold with verses by James Montgomery, T. W. Booker and John Dix.]

WHEN Severn's sweeping flood had overthrown
St. Mary's Church, the preacher then would cry:—
“Thus, Christian people, God his might hath shown
That ye to him your love may testify;
Haste, and rebuild the pile.”—But not a stone
Resumed its place. Age after age went by,
And Heaven still lacked its due, though piety
In secret did, we trust, her loss bemoan.
But now her Spirit hath put forth its claim
In Power, and Poesy would lend her voice;

Let the new Church be worthy of its aim,
That in its beauty Cardiff may rejoice!
Oh! in the past if cause there was for shame,
Let not our times halt in their better choice.

RYDAL MOUNT,
23rd Jan., 1842.

FORTH from a jutting ridge, around whose base
Winds our deep Vale, two heath-clad Rocks ascend
In fellowship, the loftiest of the pair
Rising to no ambitious height; yet both,
O'er lake and stream, mountain and flowery mead,
Unfolding prospects fair as human eyes
Ever beheld. Up-led with mutual help,
To one or other brow of those twin Peaks
Were two adventurous Sisters wont to climb,
And took no note of the hour while thence they gazed,
The blooming heath their couch, gazed, side by side,
In speechless admiration. I, a witness
And frequent sharer of their calm delight
With thankful heart, to either Eminence
Gave the baptismal name each Sister bore.
Now are they parted, far as Death's cold hand
Hath power to part the Spirits of those who love
As they did love. Ye kindred Pinnacles—
That, while the generations of mankind
Follow each other to their hiding-place
In time's abyss, are privileged to endure
Beautiful in yourselves, and richly graced
With like command of beauty—grant your aid
For MARY's humble, SARAH's silent claim,
That their pure joy in nature may survive
From age to age in blended memory.

Illustrated Books and Newspapers

DISCOURSE was deemed Man's noblest attribute,
 And written words the glory of his hand;
 Then followed Printing with enlarged command
 For thought—dominion vast and absolute
 For spreading truth, and making love expand.
 Now prose and verse sunk into disrepute
 Must lacquey a dumb Art that best can suit
 The taste of this once-intellectual Land.
 A backward movement surely have we here,
 From manhood—back to childhood; for the age—
 Back towards caverned life's first rude career.
 Avaunt this vile abuse of pictured page!
 Must eyes be all in all, the tongue and ear
 Nothing? Heaven keep us from a lower stage!

How beautiful the Queen of Night, on high
 Her way pursuing among scattered clouds,
 Where, ever and anon, her head she shrouds
 Hidden from view in dense obscurity.
 But look, and to the watchful eye
 A brightening edge will indicate that soon
 We shall behold the struggling Moon
 Break forth,—again to walk the clear blue sky.

LETTERS

Though Wordsworth was not a great letter-writer, his letters have been generously edited. Grosart gave a selection in *Prose Works*, 1876, but the first important collection was William Knight's two-volume *Memorials of Coleorton, Being Letters from Coleridge, Wordsworth and his Sister, Southey and Sir Walter Scott to Sir George, and Lady Beaumont of Coleorton, Leicestershire, 1803 to 1834* (Edinburgh, 1887). He followed this with *Letters of the Wordsworth Family From 1787 to 1855* (3 vols., London and Boston, 1907). More recently we have the authoritative edition by Ernest de Selincourt:

The Early Letters of William and Dorothy Wordsworth, 1787-1805 (Oxford, 1935).

The Letters of William and Dorothy Wordsworth 1806-1820 (two vols., Oxford, 1937).

Later Letters of William and Dorothy Wordsworth 1821-1850 (two vols., Oxford, 1938).

These volumes excluded the correspondence with Henry Reed which was published in:

Wordsworth and Reed. The Poet's Correspondence with his American Editor: 1836-1850. Edited by Leslie Nathan Broughton (Cornell and Oxford, 1933).

The present selection follows de Selincourt's text, with three exceptions. In the letter to Coleridge I have interpolated in square brackets one or two passages of the draft as printed by Grosart. The letter to a Friend of Robert Burns was published as a pamphlet in 1816, and that text is used here. The letter to Henry Reed follows the text of *Wordsworth and Reed*.

LETTERS

To Dorothy Wordsworth

Sept. 6, 1790, Keswill (a small village on the Lake of Constance)

My dear Sister,

My last letter was addressed to you from St. Valier and the Grande Chartreuse. I have, since that period, gone over a very considerable tract of country, and I will give you a sketch of my route as far as relates to mentioning the places where I have been, after I have assured you that I am in excellent health and spirits, and have had no reason to complain of the contrary during our whole tour. My spirits have been kept in a perpetual hurry of delight by the almost uninterrupted succession of sublime and beautiful objects which have passed before my eyes during the course of the last month, and you will be surprized when I assure you that our united expenses since we quitted Calais, which was on the evening of the 14th of July, have not amounted to more than twelve pounds. Never was there a more excellent school for frugality than that in which we are receiving instructions at present. I am half afraid of getting a slight touch of avarice from it. It is the end of travelling by communicating ideas to enlarge the mind; God forbid that I should stamp upon mine the strongest proof of a contracted spirit.

But I will resume the intent of this letter by endeavouring to give you some idea of our route. It will be utterly impossible for me to dwell upon particular scenes, as my paper would be exhausted before I had done with the journey of two or three days. On quitting the Grande Chartreuse, where we remained two days, contemplating, with increased pleasure, its wonderful scenery, we passed through Savoy to Geneva; thence, along the Pays de Vaud side of the lake, to Villeneuve, a small town seated at its head. The lower part of the lake did not afford us a pleasure equal to what might have been expected from its celebrity; this owing partly to its width, and partly to the weather, which was one of those hot gleamy days in which all distant objects are veiled in a species of bright obscurity.

But the higher part of the lake made us ample amends: 'tis true we had the same disagreeable weather, but the banks of the water are infinitely more picturesque, and, as it is much narrower, the landscape suffered proportionately less from that pale steam which before almost entirely hid the opposite shore. From Villeneuve we proceeded up the Rhone to Martigny, where we left our bundles, and struck over the mountains to Chamouny, to visit the glaciers of Savoy. You have undoubtedly heard of these celebrated scenes, but if you have not read of them, any description which I have here room to give you must be altogether inadequate.

After passing two days in the environs of Chamouny, we returned to Martigny, and pursued our route up the Valais, along the Rhone, to Brig. At Brig we quitted the Valais, and passed the Alps at the Simplon, in order to visit part of Italy. The impressions of three hours of our walk among the Alps will never be effaced. From Duomo d'Ossola, a town of Italy which lay in our route, we proceeded to the lake of Locarno, to visit the Boromean Islands there, and thence to Como. A more charming path was scarce ever travelled over than we had along the banks of Como. The banks of many of the Italian and Swiss lakes are so steep and rocky, as not to admit of roads; that of Como is partly of this character. A small foot-path is all the communication by land between one village and another, on the side along which we passed, for upwards of thirty miles. We entered upon this path about noon, and, owing to the steepness of the banks, were soon unmolested by the sun, which illuminated the woods, rocks, and villages of the opposite shore. The lake is narrow, and the shadows of the mountains were early thrown across it. It was beautiful to watch them travelling up the side of the hills for several hours, to remark one half of a village covered with shade, and the other bright with the strongest sunshine.

It was with regret that we passed every turn of this charming path, where every new picture was purchased by the loss of another which we would never have been tired of gazing at. The shores of the lake consist of steeps, covered with large sweeping woods of chestnut, spotted with villages; some clinging from the summits of the advancing rocks, and others hiding themselves within their recesses. Nor was the surface of the lake less interesting than its shores; part of it glowing with the richest green and gold, the reflection of the illuminated woods and part shaded with a soft blue tint. The picture was still further diversified by the number of

sails which stole lazily by us as we paused in the woods above them. After all this we had the moon. It was impossible not to contrast that repose, that complacency of spirit, produced by these lovely scenes, with the sensations I had experienced two or three days before, in passing the Alps. At the lake of Como, my mind ran through a thousand dreams of happiness, which might be enjoyed upon its banks, if heightened by conversation and the exercise of the social affections. Among the more awful scenes of the Alps, I had not a thought of man, or a single created being; my whole soul was turned to him who produced the terrible majesty before me. But I am too particular for the limits of my paper.

We followed the lake of Como to its head, and thence proceeded to Chiavenna, where we began to pass a range of the Alps, which brought us into the country of the Grisons at Sovaza. From Sovaza we pursued the valley of Missox,¹ in which it is situated, to its head; passed Mount Adel to Hinter Rhine, a small village near one of the sources of the Rhine. We pursued this branch of the Rhine downward through the Grisons to Richenau, where we turned up the other branch of the same river, followed it to Cimut, a small village near its source. Here we quitted the Grisons, and entered Switzerland at the valley of Urseren, and pursued the course of the Reuss down to Altorf; thence we proceeded, partly upon the lake, and partly behind the mountains on its banks, to Lucerne, and thence to Zurich. From Zurich, along the banks of the lake, we continued our route to Rickesweel: here we left the lake to visit the famous church and convent of Ensielden, and thence to Glarus. But this catalogue must be shockingly tedious. Suffice it to say, that, after passing a day in visiting the romantic valley of Glarus, we proceeded by the lake of Wallenstadt and the canton of Appenzell to the lake of Constance, where this letter was begun nine days ago. From Constance we proceeded along the banks of the Rhine to Schaffhausen, to view the fall of the Rhine there. Magnificent as this fall certainly is, I must confess I was disappointed in it. I had raised my ideas too high.

We followed the Rhine downward about eight leagues from Schaffhausen, where we crossed it, and proceeded by Baden to Lucerne. I am at this present moment (14th September) writing at

¹ [Wordsworth's spelling of proper names seems to have depended on a sketchy aural memory. 'Missox' would seem to be the river Moesa in the Mesocco valley; 'Adel' is Adula, 'Richenau' is Reichenau, 'Cimut' is Chiamut, 'Rickesweel' is Richterswil, and 'Ensielden' is Einsiedeln.]

a small village in the road from Grindelwald to Lauterbrunnen. By consulting your maps, you will find these villages in the south-east part of the canton of Berne, not far from the lakes of Thun and Brienz. After viewing the valley of Lauterbrunnen, we shall have concluded our tour of the more Alpine parts of Switzerland. We proceed thence to Berne, and intend, after making two or three small excursions about the lake of Neuchatel, to go to Basle, a town of Switzerland, upon the Rhine, whence we shall, if we find we can afford it, take advantage of the river down to Cologne, and so cross to Ostend, where we shall take the packet for Margate. To-day is the 14th of September; and I hope we shall be in England by the 10th of October.

I have had, during the course of this delightful tour, a great deal of uneasiness from an apprehension of your anxiety on my account. I have thought of you perpetually; and never have my eyes burst upon a scene of particular loveliness but I have almost instantly wished that you could for a moment be transported to the place where I stood to enjoy it. I have been more particularly induced to form those wishes, because the scenes of Switzerland have no resemblance to any I have found in England; and consequently it may probably never be in your power to form an idea of them. We are now, as I observed above, upon the point of quitting the most sublime and beautiful parts; and you cannot imagine the melancholy regret which I feel at the idea. I am a perfect enthusiast in my admiration of Nature in all her various forms; and I have looked upon, and as it were conversed with, the objects which this country has presented to my view so long, and with such increasing pleasure, that the idea of parting from them oppresses me with a sadness similar to what I have always felt in quitting a beloved friend.

There is no reason to be surprised at the strong attachment which the Swiss have always shown to their native country. Much of it must undoubtedly have been owing to those charms which have already produced so powerful an effect upon me, and to which the rudest minds cannot possibly be indifferent. Ten thousand times in the course of this tour have I regretted the inability of my memory to retain a more strong impression of the beautiful forms before me; and again and again, in quitting a fortunate station, have I returned to it with the most eager avidity, in the hope of bearing away a more lively picture. At this moment, when many of these landscapes are floating before

my mind, I feel a high [enjoyment] in reflecting that perhaps scarce a day of my life will pass in which I shall not derive some happiness from these images. . .

. . . I shall probably write to you again before I quit France; if not, most certainly immediately on my landing in England. You will remember me affectionately to my uncle and aunt: as he was acquainted with my having given up all thoughts of a fellowship, he may, perhaps, not be so much displeased at this journey. I should be sorry if I have offended him by it. I hope my little cousin is well. I must now bid you adieu, with assuring you that you are perpetually in my thoughts, and that

I remain,

Most affectionately yours,

W. WORDSWORTH.

To S. T. Coleridge

Christmas Eve, Grasmere, (1799)

My dearest Coleridge,
We arrived here [on the evening of St. Thomas's day,] last Friday [1799], and have now been four days in our new abode without writing to you, a long time! but we have been in such confusion as not to have had a moment's leisure. [My dear friend, we talk of you perpetually, and for me I see you every where. But let me be a little more methodical.]

. . . We left Sockburne tuesday before last early in the morning, D. on a double horse, behind that good creature George, and I upon Lilly, or Violet as Cottle calls her. We cross'd the Tees in the Sockburn fields by moonlight [and 'after ten good miles' riding came in sight of the Swale. It is there a beautiful river, with its green bank and flat holms scattered over with trees. Four miles further brought us to Richmond, with its huge ivied castle, its friar-age steeple, its castle tower resembling a huge steeple, and two other steeple towers, for such they appeared to us. . . . The situation of this place resembles that of Barnard Castle, but I should suppose is somewhat inferior to it.] George accompanied us eight miles beyond Richmond and there we parted with sorrowful hearts. We were now in Wensley dale, and D. and I set off side by side to foot

it as far as Kendal. [I will not clog my letter with a description of this celebrated dale; but I must not neglect to mention that] A little before sunset we reached one of the waterfalls of which I read you a short description in Mr. Taylor's tour. I meant to have attempted to give you a picture of it but I feel myself too lazy to execute the task. 'Tis a singular scene; such a performance as you might have expected from some giant gardiner employed by one of Queen Elizabeth's Courtiers, if this same giant gardiner had consulted with Spenser and they two had finish'd the work together. By this you will understand that with something of vastness or grandeur it is at once formal and wild. We reach'd the town of Askrigg, 12 miles, about six in the evening, having walked the last three miles in the dark and two of them over hard-frozen roads to the great annoyance of our feet and ancles. Next morning the earth was thinly covered with snow, enough to make the road soft and prevent its being slippery. On leaving Askrigg we turned aside to see another waterfall—'twas a beautiful morning, with driving snow-showers that disappeared by fits, and unveiled the east which was all one delicious pale orange colour. After walking through two fields we came to a mill which we pass'd and in a moment a sweet little valley opened before us, with an area of grassy ground, and a stream dashing over various lamina of black rocks close under a bank covered with firs. The bank and stream on our left, another woody bank on our right, and the flat meadow in front, from which, as at Buttermere, the stream had retired as it were to hide itself under the shade. As we walked up this delightful valley we were tempted to look back perpetually on the brook which reflected the orange light of the morning among the gloomy rocks with a brightness varying according to the agitation of the current. The steeple of Askrigg was between us and the east, at the bottom of the valley; it was not a quarter of a mile distant, but oh! how afr we were from it. The two banks seemed to join before us with a facing of rock common to them both, when we reached this point the valley opened out again, two rocky banks on each side, which, hung with ivy and moss, and fringed luxuriantly with brushwood, ran directly parallel to each other and then approaching with a gentle curve, at their point of union presented a lofty waterfall, the termination of the valley. 'Twas a keen frosty morning, showers of snow threatening us but the sun bright and active; we had a task of twenty one miles to perform in a short winter's day, all this put our minds in such a state of excitation that we were no unworthy spectators of this

delightful scene. On a nearer approach the water seemed to fall down a tall arch or rather nitch which had shaped itself by insensible moulderings in the wall of an old castle. We left this spot with reluctance but highly exhilarated. When we had walked about a mile and a half we overtook two men with a string of ponies and some empty carts. I recommended to D. to avail herself of this opportunity of husbanding her strength, we rode with them more than two miles, twas bitter cold, the wind driving the snow behind us in the best stile of a mountain storm. We soon reached an Inn at a place called Hardraw, and descending from our vehicles, after warming ourselves by the cottage fire we walked up the brookside to take a view of a *third* waterfall. We had not gone above a few hundred yards between two winding rocky banks before we came full upon it. It appeared to throw itself in a narrow line from a lofty wall of rock; the water which shot manifestly to some distance from the rock seeming from the extreme height of the fall to be dispersed before it reached the bason, into a thin shower of snow that was toss'd about like snow blown from the roof of a house. We were disappointed in the cascade though the introductory and accompanying banks were a noble mixture of grandeur and beauty. We walked up to the fall and what would I not give if I could convey to you the images and feelings which were then communicated to me. After cautiously sounding our way over stones of all colours and sizes encased in the clearest ice formed by the spray of the waterfall, we found the rock which before had seemed a perpendicular wall extending itself over us like the cieling of a huge cave; from the summit of which the water shot directly over our heads into a bason and among fragments of rock wrinkled over with masses of ice, white as snow, or rather as D. says like congealed froth. The water fell at least ten yards from us and we stood directly behind it, the excavation not so deep in the rock as to impress any feeling of darkness, but lofty and magnificent, and in connection with the adjoining banks excluding as much of the sky as could well be spared from a scene so exquisitely beautiful. The spot where we stood was as dry as the chamber in which I am now sitting, and the incumbent rock of which the groundwork was limestone veined and dappled with colours which melted into each other in every possible variety. On the summit of the cave were three festoons or rather wrinkles in the rock which ran parallel to each other like the folds of a curtain which it is drawn up; each of them was hung with icicles of various length, and nearly

in the middle of the festoons in the deepest valley made by their waving line the stream shot from between the rows of icicles in irregular fits of strength and with a body of water that momentarily varied. Sometimes it threw itself into the bason in one continued curve, sometimes it was interrupted almost midway in its fall and, being blown towards us, part of the water fell at no great distance from our feet like the heaviest thunder shower. In such a situation you have at every moment a feeling of the presence of the sky. Above the highest point of the waterfall large fleecy clouds drove over our heads and the sky appeared of a blue more than usually brilliant. The rocks on each side, which, joining with the sides of the cave, formed the vista of the brook were checquered with three diminutive waterfalls or rather veins of water each of which was a miniature of all that summer and winter can produce of delicate beauty. The rock in the centre of these falls where the water was most abundant, deep black, the adjoining parts yellow white purple violet and dovecolour'd; or covered with water-plants of the most vivid green, and hung with streams and fountains of ice and icicles that in some places seemed to conceal the verdure of the plants and the variegated colours of the rocks and in some places to render their hues more splendid. I cannot express to you the enchanted effect produced by this Arabian scene of colour as the wind blew aside the great waterfall behind which we stood and hid and revealed each of these faery cataracts in irregular succession or displayed them with various gradations of distinctness, as the intervening spray was thickened or dispersed. [What a scene, too, in summer!] In the luxury of our imaginations we could not help feeding upon the pleasure which in the heat of a July noon this cavern would spread through a frame exquisitely sensible. That huge rock of ivy on the right, the bank winding round on the left with all its living foliage, and the breeze stealing up the valley and bedewing the cavern with the faintest imaginable spray. And then the murmur of the water, the quiet, the seclusion, and a long summer day to dream in!

. . . So ends my long story. God bless you.

W.W.

To Charles James Fox

Grasmere, Westmoreland. January 14th 1801

Sir,

IT is not without much difficulty, that I have summoned the courage to request your acceptance of these Volumes. Should I express my real feelings, I am sure that I should seem to make a parade of diffidence and humility.

Several of the poems contained in these Volumes are written upon subjects, which are the common property of all Poets, and which, at some period of your life, must have been interesting to a man of your sensibility, and perhaps may still continue to be so. It would be highly gratifying to me to suppose that even in a single instance the manner in which I have treated these general topics should afford you any pleasure; but such a hope does not influence me upon the present occasion; in truth I do not feel it. Besides, I am convinced that there must be many things in this collection, which may impress you with an unfavorable idea of my intellectual powers. I do not say this with a wish to degrade myself; but I am sensible that this must be the case, from the different circles in which we have moved, and the different objects with which we have been conversant.

Being utterly unknown to you as I am, I am well aware, that if I am justified in writing to you at all, it is necessary, my letter should be short; but I have feelings within me which I hope will so far shew themselves in this Letter as to excuse the trespass which I am afraid I shall make. In common with the whole of the English People I have observed in your public character a constant predominance of sensibility of heart. Necessitated as you have been from your public situation to have much to do with men in bodies, and in classes, and accordingly to contemplate them in that relation, it has been your praise that you have not thereby been prevented from looking upon them as individuals, and that you have habitually left your heart open to be influenced by them in that capacity. This habit cannot but have made you dear to Poets; and I am sure that, if since your first entrance into public life there has been a single true poet living in England, he must have loved you.

But were I assured that I myself had a just claim to the title of a Poet, all the dignity being attached to the Word which belongs

to it, I do not think that I should have ventured for that reason to offer these volumes to you: at present it is solely on account of two poems in the second volume, the one entitled "*The Brothers*," and the other "*Michael*," that I have been emboldened to take this liberty.

It appears to me that the most calamitous effect, which has followed the measures which have lately been pursued in this country, is a rapid decay of the domestic affections among the lower orders of society. This effect the present Rulers of this Country are not conscious of, or they disregard it. For many years past, the tendency of society amongst almost all the nations of Europe has been to produce it. But recently by the spreading of manufactures through every part of the country, by the heavy taxes upon postage, by workhouses, Houses of Industry, and the invention of Soup-shops, &c. &c. superadded to the encreasing disproportion between the price of labour and that of the necessaries of life, the bonds of domestic feeling among the poor, as far as the influence of these things has extended, have been weakened, and in innumerable instances entirely destroyed. The evil would be the less to be regretted, if these institutions were regarded only as palliatives to a disease; but the vanity and pride of their promoters are so subtly interwoven with them, that they are deemed great discoveries and blessings to humanity. In the mean time parents are separated from their children, and children from their parents; the wife no longer prepares with her own hands a meal for her husband, the produce of his labour; there is little doing in his house in which his affections can be interested, and but little left in it which he can love. I have two neighbours, a man and his wife, both upwards of eighty years of age; they live alone; the husband has been confined to his bed many months and has never had, nor till within these few weeks has ever needed, any body to attend to him but his wife. She has recently been seized with a lameness which has often prevented her from being able to carry him his food to his bed; the neighbours fetch water for her from the well, and do other kind offices for them both, but her infirmities encrease. She told my Servant two days ago that she was afraid they must both be boarded out among some other Poor of the parish (they have long been supported by the parish) but she said, it was hard, having kept house together so long, to come to this, and she was sure that "it would burst her heart." I mention this fact to shew how deeply the spirit of independence

is, even yet, rooted in some parts of the country. These people could not express themselves in this way without an almost sublime conviction of the blessings of independent domestic life. If it is true, as I believe, that this spirit is rapidly disappearing, no greater curse can befall a land.

I earnestly entreat your pardon for having detained you so long. In the two poems, "*The Brothers*," and "*Michael*," I have attempted to draw a picture of the domestic affections as I know they exist amongst a class of men who are now almost confined to the North of England. They are small independent *proprietors* of land here called statesmen, men of respectable education who daily labour on their own little properties. The domestic affections will always be strong amongst men who live in a country not crowded with population, if these men are placed above poverty. But if they are proprietors of small estates, which have descended to them from their ancestors, the power which these affections will acquire amongst such men is inconceivable by those who have only had an opportunity of observing hired labourers, farmers, and the manufacturing Poor. Their little tract of land serves as a kind of permanent rallying point for their domestic feelings, as a tablet upon which they are written which makes them objects of memory in a thousand instances when they would otherwise be forgotten. It is a fountain fitted to the nature of social man from which supplies of affection, as pure as his heart was intended for, are daily drawn. This class of men is rapidly disappearing. You, Sir, have a consciousness, upon which every good man will congratulate you, that the whole of your public conduct has in one way or other been directed to the preservation of this class of men, and those who hold similar situations. You have felt that the most sacred of all property is the property of the Poor. The two Poems, which I have mentioned were written with a view to shew that men who do not wear fine cloaths can feel deeply. "*Pectus enim est quod disertos facit, et vis mentis. Ideoque imperitis quoque, si modo sint aliquo affectu concitati, verba non desunt.*" The poems are faithful copies from nature; and I hope, whatever effect they may have upon you, you will at least be able to perceive that they may excite profitable sympathies in many kind and good hearts, and may in some small degree enlarge our feelings of reverence for our species, and our knowledge of human nature, by shewing that our best qualities are possessed by men whom we are too apt to consider, not with

reference to the points in which they resemble us, but to those in which they manifestly differ from us. I thought, at a time when these feelings are sapped in so many ways that the two poems might co-operate, however feebly, with the illustrious efforts which you have made to stem this and other evils with which the country is labouring, and it is on this account alone that I have taken the liberty of thus addressing you.

Wishing earnestly that the time may come when the country may perceive what it has lost by neglecting your advice, and hoping that your latter days may be attended with health and comfort,

I remain, With the highest respect and admiration,
Your most obedient and humble Servt.

W. WORDSWORTH.

*To John Wilson*¹

[June 1802]

My dear Sir,

HAD it not been for a very amiable modesty you would not have imagined that your letter could give me any offence. It was on many accounts highly grateful to me. I was pleased to find that I had given so much pleasure to an ingenuous and able mind, and I further considered the enjoyment which you had had from my Poems as an earnest that others might be delighted with them in the same, or a like manner. It is plain from your letter that the pleasure which I have given you has not been blind or unthinking; you have studied the poems, and prove that you have entered into

¹ [On 24 May 1802, John Wilson, then a student of seventeen, wrote Wordsworth a very long letter from "Professor Jardine's College, Glasgow," in which he discusses the aims of *Lyrical Ballads*:

To you, sir, mankind are indebted for a species of poetry, which will continue to afford pleasure while respect is paid to virtuous feelings and while sensibility continues to pour forth tears of rapture. The flimsy ornaments of language, used to conceal meanness of thought and want of feeling, may for a short time captivate the ignorant and unwary; but true taste will discover the imposture, and expose the authors of it to merited contempt. The real feelings of human nature, expressed in simple and forcible language, will on the contrary, please those only who are capable of entertaining them.

This is Wordsworth's reply. They later became close friends and by 1808 Wilson had settled at Windermere. He later became famous under his pen-name Christopher North. His works were published in twelve volumes in Edinburgh, 1855-8.]

the spirit of them. They have not given you a cheap or vulgar pleasure; therefore I feel that you are entitled to my kindest thanks for having done some violence to your natural diffidence in the communication which you have made to me.

There is scarcely any part of your letter that does not deserve particular notice; but partly from some constitutional infirmities, and partly from certain habits of mind, I do not write any letters unless upon business, not even to my dearest friends. Except during absence from my own family I have not written five letters of friendship during the last five years. I have mentioned this in order that I may retain your good opinion, should my letter be less minute than you are entitled to expect. You seem to be desirous of my opinion on the influence of natural objects in forming the character of Nations. This cannot be understood without first considering their influence upon men in general, first, with reference to such objects as are common to all countries; and next, such as belong exclusively to any particular country, or in a greater degree to it than to another. Now it is manifest that no human being can be so besotted and debased by oppression, penury, or any other evil which unhumanizes man as to be utterly insensible to the colours, forms, or smell of flowers, the [?voices] and motions of birds and beasts, the appearances of the sky and heavenly bodies, the general warmth of a fine day, the terror and uncomfortableness of a storm, etc. etc. How dead soever many full-grown men may outwardly seem to these things, all are more or less affected by them; and in childhood, in the first practice and exercise of their senses, they must have been not the nourishers merely, but often the fathers of their passions. There cannot be a doubt that in tracts of country where images of danger, melancholy, and grandeur, or loveliness, softness, and ease prevail, they will make themselves felt powerfully in forming the characters of the people, so as to produce a uniformity of national character, where the nation is small and is not made up of men who, inhabiting different soils, climates, etc., by their civil usages and relations, materially interfere with each other. It was so formerly, no doubt, in the Highlands of Scotland; but we cannot perhaps observe it in our own island at the present day, because, even in the most sequestered places, by manufactures, traffic, religion, law, interchange of inhabitants, etc., distinctions are done away which would otherwise have been strong and obvious. This complex state of society does not, however, prevent the characters of individuals from frequently

receiving a strong bias, not merely from the impressions of general nature, but also from local objects and images. But it seems that to produce these effects, in the degree in which we frequently find them to be produced, there must be a peculiar sensibility of original organization combining with moral accidents, as is exhibited in *The Brothers* and in *Ruth*: I mean, to produce this in a marked degree; not that I believe that any man was ever brought up in the country without loving it, especially in his better moments, or in a district of particular grandeur or beauty, without feeling some stronger attachment to it on that account than he would otherwise have felt. I include, you will observe, in these considerations, the influence of climate, changes in the atmosphere and elements, and the labours and occupations which particular districts require.

You begin what you say upon *The Idiot Boy* with this observation, that nothing is a fit subject for poetry which does not please. But here follows a question, Does not please whom? Some have little knowledge of natural imagery of any kind, and, of course, little relish for it; some are disgusted with the very mention of the words "pastoral poetry," "sheep" or "shepherds"; some cannot tolerate a poem with a ghost or any supernatural agency in it; others would shrink from an animated description of the pleasures of love, as from a thing carnal and libidinous; some cannot bear to see delicate and refined feelings ascribed to men in low conditions of society, because their vanity and self-love tell them that these belong only to themselves and men like themselves in dress, station, and way of life; others are disgusted with the naked language of some of the most interesting passions of men, because either it is indelicate, or gross, or vulgar; as many fine ladies could not bear certain expressions in *The Mother* and *The Thorn*, and as in the instance of Adam Smith, who, we are told, could not endure the ballad of *Clym of the Clough*, because the author had not written like a gentleman. Then there are professional and national prejudices forevermore. Some take no interest in the description of a particular passion or quality, as love of solitariness, we will say, genial activity of fancy, love of nature, religion, and so forth, because they have [little or] nothing of it in themselves; and so on without end. I return then to [the] question, please whom? or what? I answer, human nature, as it has been [and ever] will be. But where are we to find the best measure of this? I answer, [from with]in; by stripping our own hearts naked, and by looking out of ourselves to[wards men] who lead the simplest lives, and those most according to nature;

men who have never known false refinements, wayward and artificial desires, false criticisms, effeminate habits of thinking and feeling, or who, having known these things, have outgrown them. This latter class is the most to be depended upon, but it is very small in number. People in our rank in life are perpetually falling into one sad mistake, namely, that of supposing that human nature and the persons they associate with are one and the same thing. Whom do we generally associate with? Gentlemen, persons of fortune, professional men, ladies, persons who can afford to buy, or can easily procure, books of half-a-guinea price, hot-pressed, and printed upon superfine paper. These persons are, it is true, a part of human nature, but we err lamentably if we suppose them to be fair representatives of the vast mass of human existence. And yet few ever consider books but with reference to their power of pleasing these persons and men of a higher rank; few descend lower, among cottages and fields, and among children. A man must have done this habitually before his judgment upon *The Idiot Boy* would be in any way decisive with me. I *know* I have done this myself habitually; I wrote the poem with exceeding delight and pleasure, and whenever I read it I read it with pleasure. You have given me praise for having reflected faithfully in my Poems the feelings of human nature. I would fain hope that I have done so. But a great Poet ought to do more than this; he ought, to a certain degree, to rectify men's feelings, to give them new compositions of feeling, to render their feelings more sane, pure, and permanent, in short, more consonant to nature, that is, to eternal nature, and the great moving spirit of things. He ought to travel before men occasionally as well as at their sides. I may illustrate this by a reference to natural objects. What false notions have prevailed from generation to generation as to the true character of the Nightingale. As far as my Friend's Poem in the *Lyrical Ballads* is read, it will contribute greatly to rectify these. You will recollect a passage in Cowper, where, speaking of rural sounds, he says,

And *even* the boding owl
That hails the rising moon has charms for me

Cowper was passionately fond of natural objects, yet you see he mentions it as a marvellous thing that he could connect pleasure with the cry of the owl. In the same poem he speaks in the same manner of that beautiful plant, the gorse; making in some degree

an amiable boast of his loving it, *unsightly* and unsmooth as it is. There are many aversions of this kind, which, though they have some foundation in nature, have yet so slight a one that, though they may have prevailed hundreds of years, a philosopher will look upon them as accidents. So with respect to many moral feelings, either of love or dislike. What excessive admiration was paid in former times to personal prowess and military success; it is so with the latter even at the present day, but surely not nearly so much as heretofore. So with regard to birth, and innumerable other modes of sentiment, civil and religious. But you will be inclined to ask by this time how all this applies to *The Idiot Boy*. To this I can only say that the loathing and disgust which many people have at the sight of an idiot, is a feeling which, though having some foundation in human nature, is not necessarily attached to it in any virtuous degree, but is owing in a great measure to a false delicacy, and, if I may say it without rudeness, a certain want of comprehensiveness of thinking and feeling. Persons in the lower classes of society have little or nothing of this: if an idiot is born in a poor man's house, it must be taken care of, and cannot be boarded out, as it would be by gentlefolks, or sent to a public or private asylum for such unfortunate beings. [Poor people,] seeing frequently among their neighbours such objects, easily [forget] whatever there is of natural disgust about them, and have [therefore] a sane state, so that without pain or suffering they [perform] their duties towards them. I could with pleasure pursue this subject, but I must now strictly adopt the plan which I proposed to myself when I began to write this letter, namely, that of setting down a few hints or memorandums, which you will think of for my sake.

I have often applied to idiots, in my own mind, that sublime expression of Scripture, that *their life is hidden with God*. They are worshipped, probably from a feeling of this sort, in several parts of the East. Among the Alps, where they are numerous, they are considered, I believe, as a blessing to the family to which they belong. I have, indeed, often looked upon the conduct of fathers and mothers of the lower classes of society towards idiots as the great triumph of the human heart. It is there that we see the strength, disinterestedness, and grandeur of love; nor have I ever been able to contemplate an object that calls out so many excellent and virtuous sentiments without finding it hallowed thereby, and having something in me which bears down before it, like a deluge, every feeble sensation of disgust and aversion.

. . . I am, dear sir, with great respect,

Yours sincerely,

W. WORDSWORTH.

*To Sir George Beaumont*¹

Grasmere, Feb. 11. 1805

My dear Friend,

THE public papers will already have broken the shock which the sight of this letter will give you: you will have learned by them the loss of the Earl of Abergavenny East-Indiaman, and, along with her, of a great proportion of the crew, that of her captain, our Brother and a most beloved Brother he was. This calamitous news we received at 2 o'clock to-day, and I write to you from a house of mourning. My poor sister, and wife who loved him almost as we did (for he was one of the most amiable of men), are in miserable affliction, which I do all in my power to alleviate; but Heaven knows I want consolation myself. I can say nothing higher of my ever-dear Brother than that he was worthy of his sister, who is now weeping beside me, and of the friendship of Coleridge; meek, affectionate, silently enthusiastic, loving all quiet things, and a Poet in every thing but words.

Alas! what is human life! This present moment I thought this morning, would have been devoted to the pleasing employment of writing a letter to amuse you in your confinement. I had singled out several little fragments (descriptions merely), which I purposed to have transcribed from my poems, thinking that the perusal of them might give you a few minutes' gratification; and now I am called to this melancholy office.

I shall never forget your goodness in writing so long and

¹ [Beaumont's interest in Wordsworth began when he and Lady Beaumont were Coleridge's guests at Keswick in 1802. In 1800 he had begun to rebuild Coleorton in Leicestershire with the assistance of Dance the architect: the next letter is Wordsworth's contribution to the plans. Beaumont was a friend of Reynolds and the leading literary figures of his day; though not himself a distinguished painter—the "picturesque" dictum "a good picture, like a good fiddle, should be brown" is attributed to him—he was a generous patron and collector. He left many paintings, including some by Wilson and Claude, to the National Gallery.]

interesting a letter to me under such circumstances. This letter also arrived by the same post which brought the unhappy tidings of my brother's death, so that they were both put into my hands at the same moment. . . .

Your affectionate friend,

W. WORDSWORTH.

I shall do all in my power to sustain my sister under her sorrow, which is, and long will be, bitter and poignant. We did not love him as a brother merely, but as a man of original mind, and an honour to all about him. Oh! dear friend, forgive me for talking thus. We have had no tidings of Coleridge. I tremble for the moment when he is to hear of my brother's death; it will distress him to the heart,—and his poor body cannot bear sorrow. He loved my brother, and he knows how we at Grasmere loved him.

To Sir George Beaumont

Grasmere, October 17th, 1805.

My dear Sir George,

I WAS very glad to learn that you had room for me at Coleorton and far more so that your health was so much mended. Lady Beaumont's last letter to my Sister has made us wish that you were fairly through your present engagements with workmen and Builders, and as to improvements, had smoothed over the first difficulties, and gotten things into a way of improving themselves. I do not suppose that any man ever built a house without finding in the progress of it obstacles that were unforeseen, and something that might have been better planned; things teasing and vexatious when they come, however the mind may have been made up at the outset to a general expectation of the kind.

With respect to the grounds, you have there the advantage of being in good hands, namely, those of Nature; and, assuredly, whatever petty crosses from contrariety of opinion or any other cause you may now meet with, these will soon disappear, and leave nothing behind but satisfaction and harmony. Setting out from the distinction made by Coleridge which you mentioned, that your House will belong to the Country, and not the Country be an appendage to your House, you cannot be wrong. Indeed, in the

present state of society, I see nothing interesting either to the imagination or the heart, and, of course, nothing which true taste can approve, in any interference with nature grounded upon any other principle. In times when the feudal system was in its vigor, and the personal importance of every Chieftain might be said to depend entirely upon the extent of his landed property and rights of Seignory; when the King in the habits of people's minds was considered as the primary and true proprietor of the soil, which was granted out by him to different lords, and again by them to their several tenants under them, for the joint defence of all, there might have been something imposing to the imagination in the whole face of a district, testifying, obtrusively even, its dependence upon its Chief. Such an image would have been in the spirit of the society, implying power, grandeur, military state and security; and less directly in the person of the Chief, high birth and knightly education and accomplishments; in short, the most of what was then deemed interesting or affecting. Yet, with the exception of large parks and forests, nothing of this kind was known at that time, and these were left in their wild state, so that such display of ownership, so far from taking from the beauty of Nature, was itself a chief cause of that beauty being left unspoiled and unimpaired. The *improvements*, when the place was sufficiently tranquil to admit of any, though absurd and monstrous in themselves, were confined (as our present Laureate has observed, I remember, in one of his Essays) to an acre or two about the house in the shape of garden with terraces, etc. So that Nature had greatly the advantage in those days, when what has been called English gardening was unheard of. This is now beginning to be perceived, and we are setting out to travel backwards. Painters and Poets have had the credit of being reckoned the Fathers of English gardening; they will also have, hereafter, the better praise of being fathers of a better taste. Error is in general nothing more than getting hold of good things, as every thing has two handles, by the wrong one. It was a misconception of the meaning and principles of poets and painters which gave countenance to the modern system of gardening, which is now, I hope, on the decline; in other words, we are submitting to the rule which you at present are guided by, that of having our houses belong to the country, which will of course lead us back to the simplicity of Nature. And leaving your own individual sentiments and present work out of the question, what good can come of any other guide, under any circumstances? We

have, indeed, distinctions of Rank, hereditary Legislators, and large landed Proprietors; but from numberless causes the state of society is so much altered, that nothing of that lofty or imposing interest formerly attached to large property in land, can now exist; none of the poetic pride, and pomp, and circumstance; nor anything that can be considered as making amends for violation done to the holiness of Nature. Let us take an extreme case, such as a Residence of a Duke of Norfolk or Northumberland; of course you would expect a Mansion, in some degree answerable to their consequence with all conveniences. The names of Howard and Percy will always stand high in the regards of Englishmen; but it is degrading, not only to such families as these but to every really interesting one, to suppose that their importance will be most felt where most displayed, particularly in the way I am now alluding to; this is contracting a general feeling into a local one. Besides, were it not so, as to what concerns the past, a man would be sadly astray who should go, for example, to modernise Alnwick and its dependencies, with his head full of the antient Percies: he would find nothing there which would remind him of them, except by contrast; and of that kind of admonition he would, indeed, have enough. But this by the bye, for it is against the principle itself I am contending, and not the misapplication of it. After what was said above I may ask if anything connected with the families of Howard and Percy, and their rank and influence, and thus with the state of government and society, could, in the present age, be deemed a recompense for their thrusting themselves in between us and Nature. Surely it is a substitution of little things for great when we would put a whole country into a nobleman's Livery. I know nothing which to me would be so pleasing or affecting, as to be able to say, when I am in the midst of a large estate, this man is not the victim of his condition; he is not the spoiled child of worldly grandeur; the thought of himself does not take the lead in his enjoyments; he is, where he ought to be, lowly-minded, and has human feelings; he has a true relish of simplicity, and therefore stands the best chance of being happy; at least, without it there is no happiness, because there can be no true sense of the bounty and beauty of the creation, or insight into the constitution of the human mind. Let a man of wealth and influence shew by the appearance of the country in his neighbourhood that he treads in the steps of the good sense of the age, and occasionally goes foremost; let him give countenance to improvements in agriculture,

steering clear of the pedantry of it, and showing that its grossest utilities will connect themselves harmoniously with the more intellectual arts, and even thrive the best under such connection; let him do his utmost to be surrounded with tenants living comfortably, which will always bring with it the best of all graces which a country can have—flourishing fields and happy-looking houses; and, in that part of his estate devoted to park and pleasure-ground, let him keep himself as much out of sight as possible; let Nature be all in all, taking care that everything done by man shall be in the way of being adopted by her. If people chuse that a great mansion should be the chief figure in a Country, let this kind of keeping prevail through the picture, and true taste will find no fault.

I am writing now rather for writing's sake than anything else, for I have many remembrances beating about in my head which you would little suspect. I have been thinking of you, and Coleridge, and our Scotch Tour, and Lord Lowther's grounds, and Heaven knows what. I have had before me the tremendously long ell-wide gravel walks of the Duke of Athol, among the wild glens of Blair, Bruar Water, and Dunkeld, brushed neatly, without a blade of grass or weed upon them, or anything that bore traces of a human footstep; much indeed of human hands, but wear or tear of foot was none. Thence I passed to our neighbour, Lord Lowther; you know that his predecessor, greatly, without doubt, to the advantage of the Place, left it to take care of itself. The present Lord seems disposed to do something, but not much. He has a neighbour, a Quaker, an amiable, inoffensive man, and a little of a Poet too, who has amused himself, upon his own small estate upon the Emont, in twining pathways along the banks of the river, making little Cells and bowers with inscriptions of his own writing, all very pretty as not spreading far. This man is at present Arbiter Elegantiarum, or master of the grounds, at Lowther; and what he has done hitherto is very well, as it is little more than making accessible what could not before be got at. You know something of Lowther; I believe a more delightful spot is not under the sun. Last summer I had a charming walk along the river, for which I was indebted to this man, whose intention is to carry the Walk along the Riverside till it joins the great Road at Lowther Bridge, which you will recollect just under Brougham about a mile from Penrith. This to my great sorrow! for the manufactured walk, which was absolutely necessary in many places, will in one place pass through a

few hundred yards of the forest ground, and will there efface the most beautiful specimen of a forest pathway ever seen by human eyes, and which I have paced many an hour when I was a youth, with some of those I best love. This path winds on under the trees with the wantonness of a River or a living Creature; and even if I may say so with the subtlety of a Spirit, contracting or enlarging itself, visible or invisible as it likes. There is a continued opening between the trees, a narrow slip of green turf besprinkled with Flowers, chiefly Daisies; and here it is, if I may use the same kind of language, that this pretty path plays its pranks, wearing away the turf and flowers at its pleasure. When I took the walk I was speaking of, last summer, it was Sunday. I met several of the People of the Country posting to and from church, in different parts; and in a retired spot by the River-side were two musicians (belonging probably to some corps of volunteers) playing upon the Haut-boy and Clarionet. You may guess I was not a little delighted; and as you had been a visiter at Lowther, I could not help wishing you were with me. And now I am brought to the sentiment which occasioned this detail, I may say brought back to my subject, which is this, that all just and solid pleasure in natural objects rest upon two pillars, God and Man. Laying out grounds, as it is called, may be considered as a liberal art, in some sort like Poetry and Painting; and its object, like that of all the liberal arts, is, or ought to be, to move the affections under the controul of good sense; that is, of the best and the wisest, but speaking with more precision, it is to assist Nature in moving the affections; and surely, as I have said, the affections of those who have the deepest perception of the beauty of Nature, who have the most valuable feelings, that is, the most permanent, the most independent, the most ennobling, connected with Nature and human life. No liberal art aims merely at the gratification of an individual or a class, the Painter or Poet is degraded in proportion as he does so; the true servants of the Arts pay homage to the human kind as impersonated in unwarped and enlightened minds. If this be so when we are merely putting together words or colours, how much more ought the feeling to prevail when we are in the midst of the realities of things; of the beauty and harmony, of the joy and happiness, of living creatures; of men and children, of birds and beasts, of hills and streams, and trees and flowers; with the changes of night and day, evening and morning, summer and winter; and all their unwearied actions and energies, as benign in the spirit that

animates them as they are beautiful and grand in that form and clothing which is given to them for the delight of our senses. But I must stop, for you feel these things as deeply as I; more deeply, if it were only for this, that you have lived longer. What then shall we say of many great mansions with their unqualified expulsion of human creatures from their neighbourhood, happy or not, houses of which what is fabled of the upas tree is true, that they breathe out death and desolation. I know you will feel with me here, both as a man and a lover and Professor of the Arts. I was glad to hear from Lady Beaumont that you did not think of removing your Village. Of course much here will depend upon circumstances; above all, with what kind of inhabitants, from the nature of the employments in that district, the Village is likely to be stocked. But for my part, strip my Neighbourhood of human beings, and I should think it one of the greatest privations I could undergo. You have all the poverty of solitude, nothing of its elevation. In a word, if I were disposed to write a sermon, and this is something like one, upon the subject of taste in natural beauty, I should take for my text the little pathway in Lowther Woods, and all that I had to say would begin and end in the human heart, as under the direction of the divine Nature conferring value on the objects of the senses, and pointing out what is valuable in them.

I began this subject with Coleorton in my thoughts, and a confidence, that whatever difficulties or crosses (as of many good things it is not easy to chuse the best) you might meet with in the practical application of your principles of Taste, yet, being what they are, you will soon be pleased and satisfied. Only (if I may take the freedom to say so) do not give way too much to others; considering what your studies and pursuits have been, your own judgement must be the best: professional men may suggest hints, but I would keep the decision to myself.

Lady Beaumont utters something like an apprehension that the slowness of Workmen, or other impediments, may prevent our families meeting at Coleorton next summer. We shall be sorry for this, the more so as the same cause will hinder your coming hither. At all events, we shall depend upon her frankness, which we take most kindly indeed—I mean, on the promise she has made, to let us know whether you are gotten so far through your work as to make it comfortable for us all to be together.

I cannot close this letter without a word about myself. I am sorry to say I am not yet settled to any serious employment. The

expectation of Coleridge not a little unhinges me, and still more, the number of visitors we have had; but winter is approaching, and I have good hopes. I mentioned Michael Angelo's Poetry some time ago; it is the most difficult to construe I ever met with, but just what you would expect from such a man, showing abundantly how conversant his soul was with great things. There is a mistake in the world concerning the Italian language; the Poetry of Dante and Michael Angelo proves, that if there be little majesty and strength in Italian verse, the fault is in the authors and not in the tongue. I can translate, and have translated, two Books of Ariosto at the rate, nearly, of 100 lines a day but so much meaning has been put by Michael Angelo into so little room, and that meaning sometimes so excellent in itself, that I found the difficulty of translating him insurmountable. I attempted at least fifteen of the sonnets, but could not anywhere succeed, I have sent you the only one I was able to finish, it is far from being the best or most characteristic, but the others were too much for me.

I began this Letter about a week ago, having been interrupted. I mention this, because I have on this account to apologise to Lady Beaumont, and to my Sister also, whose intention it was to have written, but being very much engaged, she put it off as I was writing. We have been weaning Dorothy, and since, she has had a return of the Croup, from an imprudent exposure on a very cold day. But she is doing well again; and my Sister will write very soon. Lady Beaumont inquired how game might be sent us. There is a direct conveyance from Manchester to Kendal by the mail, and a parcel directed for me, to be delivered at Kendal, immediately, to John Brockbank, Ambleside, Postman, would, I dare say, find its way to us expeditiously enough; only you will have the goodness to mention in your Letters when you do send anything, otherwise we may not be aware of any mistake.

I am glad the Houbraken will be acceptable, and will send it any way you shall think proper, though, perhaps, as it would only make a small parcel, there might be some risk in trusting it to the wagon or mail, unless it could be conveniently inquired after. No news of Coleridge. The length of this Letter is quite formidable; forgive it. Farewell—and believe me, my dear Sir George, your truly affectionate Friend,

W. WORDSWORTH.

To Walter Scott

Patterdale, November 7th, 1805.

My dear Scott,

. . . I WAS much pleased to hear of your engagement with Dryden; not that he is, as a *Poet*, any great favourite of mine. I admire his talents and Genius greatly, but he is not a poetical genius. The only qualities I can find in Dryden that are *essentially* poetical are a certain ardour and impetuosity of mind with an excellent ear: it may seem strange that I do not add to this great command of language; *that* he certainly has, and of such language, too, as it is most desirable that a Poet should possess, or rather, that he should not be without; but it is not language that is, in the high sense of the word poetical, being neither of the imagination nor of the passions; I mean of the amiable the ennobling or intense passions; I do not mean to say that there is nothing of this in Dryden, but as little, I think, as is possible, considering how much he has written. You will easily understand my meaning, when I refer to his versification of *Palamon and Arcite*, as contrasted with the language of Chaucer. Dryden had neither a tender heart nor a lofty sense of moral dignity: where his language is poetically impassioned, it is mostly upon unpleasing subjects; such as the follies, vices, and crimes of classes of men or of individuals. That his cannot be the language of imagination must have necessarily followed from this, that there is not a single image from Nature in the whole body of his works; and in his translation from Virgil, whenever Virgil can be fairly said to have his *eye* upon his object, Dryden always spoils the passage.

But too much of this; I am glad that you are to be his editor: his political and satirical Poems may be greatly benefited by illustration, and even absolutely require it. . . .

A correct text is the first object of an editor; then such notes as explain difficult or unintelligible passages, or throw light upon them; and lastly, which is of much less importance, notes pointing out passages or authors to which the Poet has been indebted, not in the piddling way of a phrase here and phrase there (which is detestable as a general practice), but where the Poet has really had essential obligations either as to matter or manner.

Let me hear from you as soon as convenient: if I can be of any use, do not fail to apply to me. One thing I may take the liberty

to suggest, which is, when you come to the *Fables*, might it not be advisable to print the whole of the *Tales* of Boccace in a smaller type in the original language? If this should look too much like swelling a Book, I should certainly make such extracts as would shew where Dryden had most strikingly improved upon or fallen below, his original. I think his translations from Boccace are the best, at least the most poetical of his Poems. It is many years since I saw Boccace, but I remember that Sigismunda is not married by him to Guiscard (the names are different in Boccace in both tales, I believe, certainly in Theodore, &c.). I think Dryden has much injured the story by the marriage, and degraded Sigismunda's character by it. He has also, to the best of my remembrance, degraded her character still more by making her love absolute sensuality and appetite (Dryden had no other notion of the passion). With all these defects, and they are very gross ones, it is a noble Poem. Guiscard's answer, when first reproached by Tancred, is noble in Boccace,—nothing but this: *Amor può molto più che ne voi ne io possiamo*. This, Dryden has spoiled: he says first very well, "The faults of love by love are justified," and then some four lines of miserable rant, quite *à la Maximin*. . . .

. . . Farewell and believe me your very affectionate Friend

WM. WORDSWORTH.

*To Francis Wrangham*¹

Grasmere, June 5th 1808.

My dear Wrangham,

. . . WITH regard to the latter, and more important part of your letter, I am under many difficulties. I am writing from a window which gives me a view of a little Boat gliding quietly about upon

¹ [Francis Wrangham (1769-1842), the son of a Yorkshire yeoman, was educated at Magdalene and Trinity Hall, Cambridge, where he graduated third Wrangler. He was ordained in 1793. In 1795 he and Wordsworth planned contemporary satires "in the manner of Juvenal." In 1796 he became rector of Hunmanby in Yorkshire, near Gallow Hill, the home of Mary Hutchinson. He became successively chaplain to three High Sheriffs of Yorkshire, archdeacon of Cleveland, archdeacon of the East Riding and prebendary of Chester.]

the surface of our Bason of a lake. I should like to be in it, but what could I do with such a Vessel in the heart of the Atlantic Ocean? As this Boat would be to that Navigation, so is a letter to the subject upon which you would set me afloat. Let me however say that I have read your sermon (which I lately received from Longman) with much pleasure. I only gave it a cursory perusal, for since it arrived our family has been in great confusion, we having removed to another House, in which we are not yet half settled. The Appendix I had received before in a frank, and of that I feel myself more entitled to speak, because I had read it more at leisure.

I am entirely of accord with you, in chiefly recommending religious Books for the Poor; but of many of those which you recommend I can neither speak in praise nor blame, as I have never read them. Yet, as far as my own observation goes, which has been mostly employed upon agricultural Persons in thinly-peopled districts, I cannot find that there is much disposition to read among the labouring Classes, or much occasion for it. Among Manufacturers and Persons engaged in sedentary employments it is, I know, very different. The labouring man in agriculture generally carries on his work either in solitude, or with his own Family, persons whose minds he is thoroughly acquainted with, and with whom he is under no temptation to enter into discussion, or to compare opinions. He goes home from the field, or the Barn, and within and about his own house he finds a hundred little jobs which furnish him with a change of employment, which is grateful and profitable; then comes supper, and to bed. This for week-days: for Sabbaths he goes to Church, with us mostly twice a day; on coming home some one turns to the Bible, finds the Text and probably reads the chapter whence it is taken, or perhaps some other; and in the afternoon the master or mistress frequently reads the Bible, if alone; and on this day the mistress of the house *almost always* teaches the children to read, or as they express it, hears them a Lesson; or, if not thus employed, they visit their neighbours or receive them in their own houses as they drop in, and keep up by the hour a slow and familiar chat. This kind of life of which I have seen much, and which I know will be looked upon with little complacency by many religious persons, from its bearing no impression of their particular modes of faith and from its want of fervent piety and habitual godliness, is peaceable; and as innocent as (the frame of society and the practices of government

being what they are) we have a right to expect; besides, it is much more intellectual than a careless observer would suppose.

One of our Neighbours, who lives as I have described, was yesterday walking with me, and as we were pacing on, talking about indifferent matters, by the side of a Brook, he suddenly said to me, with great spirit and a lively smile: "I like to walk where I can hear the sound of a Beck" (the word as you know in our dialect for a brook). I cannot but think that this Man, without being conscious of it, has had many devout feelings connected with the appearances which have presented themselves to him in his employment as a Shepherd, and that the pleasure of his heart at that moment was an acceptable offering to the divine Being. But to return to the subject of Books; I find, among the people I am speaking of, half-penny Ballads, and penny and two-penny histories, in great abundance; these are often bought as charitable tributes to the poor Persons who hawk them about (and it is the best way of procuring them); they are frequently stitched together in tolerably thick volumes, and such I have read; some of the contents, though not often religious, very good; others objectionable, either for the superstition in them (such as prophecies, fortune-telling, etc.) or more frequently for indelicacy. I have so much felt the influence of these straggling papers, that I have many a time wished that I had talents to produce songs, poems, and little histories, that might circulate among other good things in this way, supplanting partly the bad; flowers and useful herbs and to take place of weeds. Indeed some of the Poems which I have published were composed, not without a hope that at some time or other they might answer this purpose.

The kind of Library which you recommend would not, I think, for the reasons given above, be of much direct use in any of the agricultural or pastoral districts of Cumberland or Westmorland with which I am acquainted, though almost every person here can read: I mean of *general* use as to morals or behaviour; it might however with individuals do much in awakening enterprize, calling forth ingenuity, and fostering genius. I have known several Persons who would eagerly have sought, not after these Books merely, but *any* Books, and would have been most happy in having such a collection to repair to. The knowledge thus acquired would also have spread, by being dealt about in conversation among their Neighbours, at the door, or by the fireside—so that it is not easy to foresee how far the good might extend; and harm I can see none, which would not be greatly overbalanced by the advantage.

The situation of Manufacturers is deplorably different. The monotony of their employments renders some sort of stimulus, intellectual or bodily, absolutely necessary for them. Their work is carried on in clusters, Men from different parts of the world, and perpetually changing; so that every individual is constantly in the way of being brought into contact with new notions and feelings, and of being unsettled in his own accordingly. A select Library therefore, in such situations, may be of the same use as a public Dial, keeping every Body's clock in some kind of order. . . .

. . . Wishing you success in every good work I remain your affectionate friend

WM. WORDSWORTH.

To A Friend of Robert Burns¹

Rydal Mount, January 1816.

Dear Sir,

. . . SILENCE is a privilege of the grave, a right of the departed: let him, therefore, who infringes that right, by speaking publicly of, for, or against, those who cannot speak for themselves, take heed that he opens not his mouth without a sufficient sanction. De mortuis nil nisi bonum, is a rule in which these sentiments have been pushed to an extreme that proves how deeply humanity is interested in maintaining them. And it was wise to announce the precept thus absolutely; both because there exist in that same nature, by which it has been dictated, so many temptations to disregard it,—and because there are powers and influences, within and without us, that will prevent its being literally fulfilled—to the suppression of profitable truth. Penalties of law, conventions of manners, and personal fear, protect the reputation of the living; and something of this protection is extended to the recently dead,—who survive, to a certain degree, in their kindred and friends. Few are so insensible as not to feel this, and not to be actuated by the feeling. But only to philosophy enlightened by the affections does it belong justly to estimate the claims of the deceased on the one hand, and of the present age and future generations, on the other; and to strike a balance between them.—Such philosophy runs a risk of becoming extinct among us, if the coarse intrusions

¹ James Gray, Esq., of Edinburgh.

into the recesses, the gross breaches upon the sanctities, of domestic life, to which we have lately been more and more accustomed, are to be regarded as indications of a vigorous state of public feeling—favourable to the maintenance of the liberties of our country.—Intelligent lovers of freedom are from necessity bold and hardy lovers of truth; but, according to the measure in which their love is intelligent, is it attended with a finer discrimination, and a more sensitive delicacy. The wise and good (and all others being lovers of licence rather than of liberty are in fact slaves) respect, as one of the noblest characteristics of Englishmen, that jealousy of familiar approach, which, while it contributes to the maintenance of private dignity, is one of the most efficacious guardians of rational public freedom.

The general obligation upon which I have insisted, is especially binding upon those who undertake the biography of *authors*. Assuredly, there is no cause why the lives of that class of men should be pried into with the same diligent curiosity, and laid open with the same disregard of reserve, which may sometimes be expedient in composing the history of men who have borne an active part in the world. Such thorough knowledge of the good and bad qualities of these latter, as can only be obtained by a scrutiny of their private lives, conduces to explain not only their own public conduct, but that of those with whom they have acted. Nothing of this applies to authors, considered merely as authors. Our business is with their books,—to understand and to enjoy them. And, of poets more especially, it is true—that, if their works be good, they contain within themselves all that is necessary to their being comprehended and relished. It should seem that the ancients thought in this manner; for of the eminent Greek and Roman poets, few and scanty memorials were, I believe, ever prepared; and fewer still are preserved. It is delightful to read what, in the happy exercise of his own genius, Horace chooses to communicate of himself and his friends; but I confess I am not so much a lover of knowledge, independent of its quality, as to make it likely that it would much rejoice me, were I to hear that records of the Sabine poet and his contemporaries, composed upon the Boswellian plan, had been unearthed among the ruins of Herculaneum. You will interpret what I am writing, *liberally*. With respect to the light which such a discovery might throw upon Roman manners, there would be reasons to desire it: but I should dread to disfigure the beautiful ideal of the memories of those

illustrious persons with incongruous features, and to sully the imaginative purity of their classical works with gross and trivial recollections. The least weighty objection to heterogeneous details, is that they are mainly superfluous, and therefore an incumbrance.

But you will perhaps accuse me of refining too much; and it is, I own, comparatively of little importance, while we are engaged in reading the *Iliad*, the *Eneid*, the tragedies of *Othello* and *King Lear*, whether the authors of these poems were good or bad men; whether they lived happily or miserably. Should a thought of the kind cross our minds, there would be no doubt, if irresistible external evidence did not decide the question unfavourably, that men of such transcendant genius were both good and happy: and if, unfortunately, it had been on record that they were otherwise, sympathy with the fate of their fictitious personages would banish the unwelcome truth whenever it obtruded itself, so that it would but slightly disturb our pleasure. Far otherwise is it with that class of poets, the principal charm of whose writings depends upon the familiar knowledge which they convey of the personal feelings of their authors. This is eminently the case with the effusions of Burns;—in the small quantity of narrative that he has given, he himself bears no inconsiderable part; and he has produced no drama. Neither the subjects of his poems, nor his manner of handling them, allow us long to forget their author. On the basis of his human character he has reared a poetic one, which with more or less distinctness presents itself to view in almost every part of his earlier, and, in my estimation, his most valuable verses. This poetic fabric, dug out of the quarry of genuine humanity, is airy and spiritual:—and though the materials, in some parts, are coarse, and the disposition is often fantastic and irregular, yet the whole is agreeable and strikingly attractive. Plague, then, upon your remorseless hunters after matter of fact (who, after all, rank among the blindest of human beings) when they would convince you that the foundations of this admirable edifice are hollow; and that its frame is unsound! Granting that all which has been raked up to the prejudice of Burns were literally true; and that it added, which it does not, to our better understanding of human nature and human life (for that genius is not incompatible with vice, and that vice leads to misery—the more acute from the sensibilities which are the elements of genius—we needed not those communications to inform us) how poor would have been

the compensation for the deduction made, by this extrinsic knowledge, from the intrinsic efficacy of his poetry—to please, and to instruct!

In illustration of this sentiment, permit me to remind you that it is the privilege of poetic genius to catch, under certain restrictions of which perhaps at the time of its being exerted it is but dimly conscious, a spirit of pleasure wherever it can be found,—in the walks of nature, and in the business of men.—The poet, trusting to primary instincts, luxuriates among the felicities of love and wine, and is enraptured while he describes the fairer aspects of war: nor does he shrink from the company of the passion of love though immoderate—from convivial pleasure though intemperate—nor from the presence of war though savage, and recognized as the hand-maid of desolation. Frequently and admirably has Burns given way to these impulses of nature; both with reference to himself and in describing the condition of others. Who, but some impenetrable dunce or narrow-minded puritan in works of art, ever read without delight the picture which he has drawn of the convivial exaltation of the rustic adventurer, Tam o'Shanter? The poet fears not to tell the reader in the outset that his hero was a desperate and sottish drunkard, whose excesses were frequent as his opportunities. This reprobate sits down to his cups, while the storm is roaring, and heaven and earth are in confusion;—the night is driven on by song and tumultuous noise—laughter and jest thicken as the beverage improves upon the palate—conjugal fidelity archly bends to the service of general benevolence—selfishness is not absent, but wearing the mask of social cordiality—and, while these various elements of humanity are blended into one proud and happy composition of elated spirits, the anger of the tempest without doors only heightens and sets off the enjoyment within.—I pity him who cannot perceive that, in all this, though there was no moral purpose, there is a moral effect.

“Kings may be blest, but Tam was glorious,
O'er a' the *ills* of life victorious.”

What a lesson do these words convey of charitable indulgence for the vicious habits of the principal actor in this scene, and of those who resemble him!—Men who to the rigidly virtuous are objects almost of loathing, and whom therefore they cannot serve! The poet, penetrating the unsightly and disgusting surfaces of

things, has unveiled with exquisite skill the finer ties of imagination and feeling, that often bind these beings to practices productive of so much unhappiness to themselves, and to those whom it is their duty to cherish;—and, as far as he puts the reader into possession of this intelligent sympathy, he qualifies him for exercising a salutary influence over the minds of those who are thus deplorably enslaved.

Not less successfully does Burns avail himself of his own character and situation in society, to construct out of them a poetic self,—introduced as a dramatic personage—for the purpose of inspiring his incidents, diversifying his pictures, recommending his opinions, and giving point to his sentiments. His brother can set me right if I am mistaken when I express a belief that, at the time when he wrote his story of “Death and Dr. Hornbook,” he had very rarely been intoxicated, or perhaps even much exhilarated by liquor. Yet how happily does he lead his reader into that track of sensations! and with what lively humour does he describe the disorder of his senses and the confusion of his understanding, put to test by a deliberate attempt to count the horns of the moon!

“But whether she had three or four
He could na’ tell.”

Behold a sudden apparition that disperses this disorder, and in a moment chills him into possession of himself! Coming upon no more important mission than the grisly phantom was charged with, what mode of introduction could have been more efficient or appropriate?

But, in those early poems, through the veil of assumed habits and pretended qualities, enough of the real man appears to shew that he was conscious of sufficient cause to dread his own passions, and to bewail his errors! We have rejected as false sometimes in the letter, and of necessity as false in the spirit, many of the testimonies that others have borne against him:—but, by his own hand—in words the import of which cannot be mistaken—it has been recorded that the order of his life but faintly corresponded with the clearness of his views. It is probable that he would have proved a still greater poet if, by strength of reason, he could have controlled the propensities which his sensibility engendered; but he would have been a poet of a different class: and certain it is, had that desirable restraint been early established, many peculiar beauties which enrich his verses could never have existed, and

many accessory influences, which contribute greatly to their effect, would have been wanting. For instance, the momentous truth of the passage already quoted, "One point must still be greatly dark," &c. could not possibly have been conveyed with such pathetic force by any poet that ever lived, speaking in his own voice; unless it were felt that, like Burns, he was a man who preached from the text of his own errors; and whose wisdom, beautiful as a flower that might have risen from seed sown from above, was in fact a scion from the root of personal suffering. Whom did the poet intend should be thought of as occupying that grave over which, after modestly setting forth the moral discernment and warm affections of its "poor inhabitant," it is supposed to be inscribed that

"—Thoughtless follies laid him low,
And stained his name."

Who but himself,—himself anticipating the too probable termination of his own course? Here is a sincere and solemn avowal—a public declaration *from his own will*—a confession at once devout, poetical, and human—a history in the shape of a prophecy! What more was required of the biographer than to have put his seal to the writing, testifying that the foreboding had been realized, and that the record was authentic?—Lastingly is it to be regretted in respect to this memorable being, that inconsiderate intrusion has not left us at liberty to enjoy his mirth, or his love; his wisdom or his wit; without an admixture of useless, irksome, and painful details, that take from his poems so much of that right—which, with all his carelessness, and frequent breaches of self-respect, he was not negligent to maintain for them—the right of imparting solid instruction through the medium of unalloyed pleasure.

You will have noticed that my observations have hitherto been confined to Dr. Currie's book: if, by fraternal piety, the poison can be sucked out of this wound, those inflicted by meaner hands may be safely left to heal of themselves. Of the other writers who have given their names, only one lays claim to even a slight acquaintance with the author, whose moral character they take upon them publicly to anatomize. The Edinburgh reviewer—and him I single out because the author of the vindication of Burns has treated his offences with comparative indulgence, to which he has no claim, and which, from whatever cause it might arise, has interfered with the dispensation of justice—the Edinburgh

reviewer thus writes:¹ “The *leading vice* in Burns’s character, and the *cardinal deformity*, indeed, of ALL his productions was, his contempt, or affectation of contempt, for prudence, decency, and regularity, and his admiration of thoughtlessness, oddity, and vehement sensibility: his belief, in short, in the dispensing power of genius and social feeling in all matters of morality and common sense;” adding, that these vices and erroneous notions “have communicated to a great part of his productions a character of immorality at once contemptible and hateful.” We are afterwards told, that he is *perpetually* making a parade of his thoughtlessness, inflammability, and imprudence; and, in the next paragraph, that he is *perpetually* doing something else; i.e. “boasting of his own independence.”—Marvellous address in the commission of faults! not less than Cæsar shewed in the management of business; who, it is said, could dictate to three secretaries upon three several affairs, at one and the same moment! But, to be serious. When a man, self-elected into the office of a public judge of the literature and life of his contemporaries, can have the audacity to go these lengths in framing a summary of the contents of volumes that are scattered over every quarter of the globe, and extant in almost every cottage of Scotland, to give the lie to his labours; we must not wonder if, in the plenitude of his concern for the interests of abstract morality, the infatuated slanderer should have found no obstacle to prevent him from insinuating that the poet, whose writings are to this degree stained and disfigured, was “one of the sons of fancy and of song, who spend in vain superfluities the money that belongs of right to the pale industrious tradesman and his famishing infants; and who rave about friendship and philosophy in a tavern, while their wives’ hearts,” &c. &c.

. . . I am, dear Sir, respectfully yours,

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH.

¹ From Mr. Peterkin’s pamphlet, who vouches for the accuracy of his citations; omitting, however, to apologize for their length.

*To Hugh James Rose*¹

December, 1828[?]

My dear Sir,

I HAVE taken a folio sheet to make certain minutes upon the subject of Education. . . .

As a Christian preacher your business is with man as an immortal being. Let us imagine you to be addressing those, and those only, who would gladly co-operate with you in any course of education which is most likely to insure to men a happy immortality. Are you satisfied with that course which the most active of this class are bent upon? Clearly not, as I remember from your conversation, which is confirmed by your last letter. Great principles, you hold, are sacrificed to shifts and expedients. I agree with you. What more sacred law of nature, for instance, than that the mother should educate her child? Yet we felicitate ourselves upon the establishment of infant schools, which is in direct opposition to it. Nay, we interfere with the maternal instinct before the child is born, by furnishing, in cases where there is no necessity, the mother with baby linen for her unborn child. Now, that in too many instances a lamentable necessity may exist for this, I allow; but why should such charity be obtruded? Why should so many excellent ladies form themselves into committees, and rush into an almost indiscriminate benevolence, which precludes the poor mother from the strongest motive human nature can be actuated by for industry, for forethought, and for self-denial? When the stream has thus been poisoned at its fountain-head, we proceed, by separating, through infant schools, the mother from the child and from the rest of the family, disburthening them of all care of the little one for perhaps eight hours of the day. To those who think this an evil, but a necessary one, much might be said, in order to qualify unreasonable expectations. But there are thousands of stirring people now in England, who are so far misled as to deem these schools *good in themselves*, and to wish that, even in the smallest

¹ [H. J. Rose (1795-1828) was a Tractarian and a friend of Newman, Froude and Keble. In 1820 he had been Christopher Wordsworth's curate at Buxted in Sussex. He was several years select preacher at Cambridge and on 11 December, 1828 Wordsworth wrote: "I have read your excellent sermons delivered before the University several times. In nothing were my notions different from yours as there expressed."]

villages, the children of the poor should have what *they* call "a good education" in this way. Now, these people (and no error is at present more common) confound *education* with *tuition*.

Education, I need not remark to you, is everything that *draws out* the human being, of which *tuition*, the teaching of schools especially, however important, is comparatively an insignificant part. Yet the present bent of the public mind is to sacrifice the greater power to the less; all that life and nature teach, to the little that can be learned from books and a master. In the eyes of an enlightened statesman this is absurd; in the eyes of a pure lowly-minded Christian it is monstrous.

The Spartan and other ancient communities might disregard domestic ties, because they had the substitution of country, which we cannot have. With us, country is a mere name compared with what it was to the Greeks: first, as contrasted with barbarians; and next, and above all, as that *passion* only was strong enough to preserve the individual, his family, and the whole State from ever-impending destruction. Our course is to supplement domestic attachments without the possibility of substituting others more capricious. What can grow out of it but selfishness?

Let it then be universally admitted that infant schools are an evil, only tolerated to qualify a greater, viz. the inability of mothers to attend to their children, and the like inability of the elder to take care of the younger, from their labour being wanted in factories, or elsewhere, for their common support. But surely this is a sad state of society; and if these expedients of tuition or education (if that word is not to be parted with) divert our attention from the fact that the remedy for so mighty an evil must be sought elsewhere, they are most pernicious things, and the sooner they are done away with the better.

But even as a course of tuition I have strong objections to infant schools, and in no small degree to the Madras system also. We must not be deceived by premature adroitness. The *intellect* must not be trained with a view to what the infant or child may perform, without constant reference to what that performance promises for the man. It is with the mind as with the body. I recollect seeing a German babe stuffed with beer and beef, who had the appearance of an infant Hercules. *He* might have enough in him of the old Teutonic blood to grow up to be a strong man; but tens of thousands would dwindle and perish after such unreasonable cramming. Now I cannot but think that the like would happen with

our modern pupils, if the views of the patrons of these schools were realised. The diet they offer is not the natural diet for infant and juvenile minds. The faculties are over-strained, and not exercised with that simultaneous operation which ought to be aimed at as far as is practicable. Natural history is taught in infant schools by pictures stuck up against walls, and such mummary. A moment's notice of a red-breast pecking by a winter's hearth is worth it all.

. . . Farewell, ever affectionately yours,

WM. WORDSWORTH.

*To the Rev. Alexander Dyce*¹

Rydal Mount, Kendal, Jan. 12th, 1829

Dear Sir,

I REGRET to hear of the indisposition from which you have been suffering. That you are convinced gives me great pleasure—as I hope that every other Editor of Collins will follow your example.¹

You are at perfect liberty to declare that you have rejected Bell's Copy in consequence of my opinion of it—and I feel much satisfaction in being the Instrument of rescuing the memory of Collins from this disgrace. I have always felt some concern that Mr. Home, who lived several years after Bell's publication, did not testify more regard for his deceased friend's memory by protesting against this imposition. Mr. Mackenzie is still living, and I shall shortly have his opinion upon the question—and if it be at all interesting I shall take the liberty of sending it to you.

Dyer is another of our minor Poets—minor as to quantity—of whom one would wish to know more. Particulars about him might still be collected, I should think, in South Wales—his native Country, and where in early life he practised as a Painter. I have often heard Sir George Beaumont express a curiosity about his

¹ [On 29 October 1828 Wordsworth wrote to thank Dyce for his "elegant Edition of Collins" and setting out in great detail his reasons for supposing that the text Dyce had followed, Bell's edition in the British Library, 1789, contained spurious work. His letter is a justification of principle against "admitting anything as the genuine work of a deceased Author but upon substantial external evidence. There may be exceptions to this rule, but they are very rare; and in our Literature are almost confined to certain works of Shakespear (Pericles for example) which ought to be admitted from internal evidence alone."]

pictures—and a wish to see any specimen of his pencil that might survive. If you are a Rambler, perhaps you may, at some time or other, be led into Carmarthenshire, and might bear in mind what I have just said of this excellent Author.—

I had once a hope to have learned some unknown particulars of Thomson, about Jedburgh, but I was disappointed—had I succeeded, I meant to publish a short life of him, prefixed to a Volume containing *The Seasons*, *The Castle of Indolence*, his minor pieces in rhyme, and a few Extracts from his plays, and his *Liberty*; and I feel still inclined to do something of the kind. These three Writers, Thomson, Collins, and Dyer, had more poetic Imagination than any of their Contemporaries, unless we reckon Chatterton as of that age—I do not blame Pope, for he stands alone—as a man most highly gifted—but unluckily he took the Plain, when the Heights were within his reach—

Excuse this long Letter, and believe me,

Sincerely yours,

WM. WORDSWORTH.

*To George Huntly Gordon*¹

Rydal Mount, Thursday Night, Feb. 26. 1829

Y o u ask for my opinion on the Roman Catholic question.

I dare scarcely trust my pen to the notice of the question which the Duke of Wellington tells us is about to be *settled*. One thing no rational person will deny, that the experiment is hazardous. Equally obvious is it that the timidity, supineness, and other unworthy qualities of the government for many years past have produced the danger, the extent of which they now affirm imposes a necessity of granting all that the Romanists demand. Now, it is rather too much that the country should be called upon to take the measure of this danger from the very men who may almost be said to have created it. Danger is a relative thing, and the first requisite for judging of what we have to dread from the physical force of the Roman Catholics is to be in sympathy with the Protestants. Had our Ministers been so, could they have suffered them-

¹ [G. H. Gordon (1798–1868) was from 1824 to 1826 Scott's amanuensis. The Catholic Relief Bill here referred to became law a few weeks after this letter was written.]

selves to be bearded by the Catholic Association for so many years?

C——, if I may leave to say it, loses sight of *things* in *names*, when he says that they should not be admitted as Roman Catholics, but simply as British subjects. The question before us is, Can Protestantism and Popery be co-ordinate powers in the constitution of a *free* country, and at the same time Christian belief be in that country a vital principle of action?

I fear not. Heaven grant I may be deceived!

W. W.

To Lady Frederick Bentinck

Rydal Mount, Nov. 9 [1831]

My dear Lady Frederick,

. . . You are quite right, dear Lady Frederick, in congratulating me on my late ramble in Scotland. I set off with a severe inflammation in one of my eyes, which was removed by being so much in the open air; and for more than a month I scarcely saw a newspaper, or heard of their contents. During this time we almost forgot, my daughter and I, the deplorable state of the country. My spirits rallied, and, with exercise—for I often walked scarcely less than twenty miles a day—and the employment of composing verses amid scenery the most beautiful, and at a season when the foliage was most rich and varied, the time fled away delightfully; and when we came back into the world again, it seemed as if I had waked from a dream that was never to return. We travelled in an open carriage with one horse, driven by Dora; and while we were in the Highlands I walked most of the way by the side of the carriage, which left us leisure to observe the beautiful appearances. The rainbows and coloured mists floating about the hills were more like enchantment than anything I ever saw, even among the Alps. There was in particular, the day we made the tour of Loch Lomond in the steamboat, a fragment of a rainbow, so broad, so splendid, so glorious with its reflection in the calm water, that it astonished every one on board, a party of foreigners especially, who could not refrain from expressing their pleasure in a more lively manner than we are accustomed to do.

My object in going to Scotland so late in the season was to see Sir Walter Scott before his departure. We stayed with him three days, and he quitted Abbotsford the day after we left it. His health has

undoubtedly been much shattered, by successive shocks of apoplexy, but his friends say he is so much recovered that they entertain good hopes of his life and faculties being spared. Mr. Lockhart tells me that he derived benefit by a change of treatment made by his London physicians, and that he embarked in good spirits.

As to public affairs, I have no hope but in the goodness of Almighty God. The Lords have recovered much of the credit they had lost by their conduct in the Roman Catholic question. As an Englishman I am deeply grateful for the stand which they have made, but I cannot help fearing that they may be seduced or intimidated. Our misfortune is, that the disapprovers of this monstrous bill¹ give way to a belief that nothing can prevent its being passed; and therefore they submit.

As to the cholera, I cannot say it appals me much; it may be in the order of Providence to employ this scourge for bringing the nation to its senses; though history tells us in the case of the plague at Athens, and other like visitations, that men are never so wicked and depraved as when afflictions of that kind are upon them. So that, after all, one must come round to our only support, submission to the will of God, and faith in the ultimate goodness of His dispensations.

I am sorry you did not mention your son, in whose health and welfare and progress in his studies I am always much interested. Pray remember me kindly to Lady Caroline. All here join with me in presenting their kindest remembrances to yourself; and believe me, dear Lady Frederick,

Faithfully and affectionately yours,

WM. WORDSWORTH.

To the Rev. Henry Alford²

[Postmark] Ambleside, Feb. 21. 1840

My dear Sir,

PRAY excuse my having been some little time in your debt. I could plead many things in extenuation, the chief, that old one of the state

¹ [The Reform Bill.]

² [Henry Alford (1810–71) was the author of the hymn, "Come, ye thankful people, come," and was Dean of Canterbury from 1857.]

of my eyes, which never leaves me at liberty either to read or write a tenth part as much as I could wish, and as otherwise I ought to do. It cannot but be highly gratifying to me to learn that my writings are prized so highly by a poet and critic of your powers. The essay upon them which you have so kindly sent me seems well qualified to promote your views in writing it. I was particularly pleased with your distinction between religion in poetry and versified religion. For my own part, I have been averse to frequent mention of the mysteries of Christian faith; not from a want of a due sense of their momentous nature, but the contrary. I felt it far too deeply to venture on handling the subject as familiarly as many scruple not to do. I am far from blaming them, but let them not blame me, nor turn from my companionship on that account. Besides general reasons for diffidence in treating subjects of Holy Writ, I have some especial ones. I might err in points of faith, and I should not deem my mistakes less to be deprecated because they were expressed in metre. Even Milton, in my jumble judgment, has erred, and grievously; and what poet could hope to atone for his apprehensions in the way in which that mighty mind has done?

I am not at all desirous that any one should write an elaborate critique on my poems. There is no call for it. If they be from above, they will do their own work in course of time; if not, they will perish as they ought. But scarcely a week passes in which I do not receive grateful acknowledgments of the good they have done to the minds of the several writers. They speak of the relief they have received from them under affliction and in grief, and of the calmness and elevation of spirit which the poems either give, or assist them in attaining. As these benefits are not without a traceable bearing upon the good of the immortal soul, the sooner, perhaps, they are pointed out and illustrated in a work like yours, the better.

. . . Mrs W. unites with me in kind regards to you both; and believe me

My Dear Sir,

Faithfully yours,

WM. WORDSWORTH.

Correspondent Unknown

Rydal Mount, April 1st, 1843

Dear Sir,

. . . As I advance in life I feel myself more and more incapable of doing justice to the attempts of young authors. The taste and judgment of an old man have too little of aptitude and flexibility for new things; and I am thoroughly convinced that a young writer cannot do worse than lean upon a veteran. It was not my own habit to look out for such guidance. I trusted to myself, and to the principles of criticism which I drew from the practice of the great poets, and not from any observations made upon their works by professed censors. As you are so intimately acquainted with my poems, and as no change has taken place in my manner for the last forty-five years, you will not be at a loss to gather from them upon what principles I write, and what accordingly is likely to be my judgment of your own performances, either as to subject or style.

I remain, my dear sir,

Faithfully, your obliged

WM. WORDSWORTH.

To the Lord Chamberlain, Earl De La Warr

Rydal Mount, Ambleside, April 1. 1843

My Lord,

THE recommendation made by your lordship to the Queen, and graciously approved by her Majesty, that the vacant office of poet laureate should be offered to me, affords me high gratification. Sincerely am I sensible of this honour; and let me be permitted to add that the being deemed worthy to succeed my lamented and reverend friend, Mr. Southey, enhances the pleasure I receive upon this occasion.

The appointment, I feel, however, imposes duties which, far advanced in life as I am, I cannot venture to undertake; and I must therefore beg leave to decline the acceptance of an offer, that I shall always remember with no unbecoming pride.

Her Majesty will not, I trust, disapprove of a determination forced upon me by reflections which it is impossible for me to set aside.

Deeply feeling the distinction conferred upon me, and grateful for the terms in which your lordship has made the communication, I have the honour to be,

Your lordship's most obedient humble servant,
W. WORDSWORTH.

To Earl De La Warr

Rydal Mount, Ambleside, April 4. 1843

My Lord,

BEING assured by your lordship's letter and by one from Sir Robert Peel, both received this day, that the appointment to the laureateship is to be considered merely honorary, the apprehensions which at first compelled me to decline accepting the offer of that appointment are entirely removed.

Sir Robert Peel has also done me the honour of uniting his wish with that which your lordship has urged in a manner most gratifying to my feelings; so that, under these circumstances—and sanctioned as the recommendation has been by her Majesty's gracious approval—it is with unalloyed pleasure that I accept this high distinction.

I have the honour to be, most gratefully,

Your lordship's obedient humble servant,
WILLIAM WORDSWORTH.

*To Henry Reed*¹

Rydal Mount, Ambleside, July 1. 1845

My Dear Mr. Reed,

. . . MY absence from home lately was of more than three weeks. I took the journey to London solely to pay my respects to the Queen upon my appointment to the Laureatship upon the decease of my

¹ [Henry Reed was born in Philadelphia in 1808 and was for twenty years Professor of Rhetoric and English Literature in the University of Pennsylvania. In 1837 he edited an edition of Wordsworth's Poems and supervised the 1851 American edition of Christopher Wordsworth's *Memoirs of William Wordsworth*.]

Friend Mr. Southey. The weather was very cold, and I caught an inflammation in one of my eyes which rendered my stay in the South very uncomfortable. I nevertheless did in respect to the object of my journey all that was required. The reception given me by the young Queen at her Ball was most gracious. Mrs. Everett the wife of your minister among many others was a witness to it; without knowing who I was. It moved her to the shedding of tears. This effect was in part produced, I suppose by American habits of feeling, as pertaining to a republican government like yours. To see a grey haired Man 75 years of age kneeling down in a large assembly, to kiss the hand of a young Woman is a sight for which institutions essentially democratic do not prepare a spectator of either sex, and must naturally place the opinions upon which a Republic is founded, and the sentiments which support it, in strong contrast with a government based and upheld as our's is. I am not therefore surprized that Mrs. Everett was moved as she herself described to persons of my acquaintance, among others to Mr Rogers the Poet. By the bye this Gentleman, now I believe in his 83rd year I saw more of than of any other Person except my Host Mr. Moxon, while I was in London. He is singularly fresh and strong for his years, and his mental faculties (with the exception of his memory a little) not at all impaired. It is remarkable that he and the Revd. W. Bowles were both distinguished as Poets when I was a school-boy, and they have survived almost all their eminent contemporaries, several of whom came into notice long after them. Since they became known Burns, Cowper, Mason the author of *Caractacus* & friend of Gray have died. Thomas Warton Laureate, then Byron, Shelley, Keats and a good deal later Scott, Coleridge, Crabbe, Southey, Lamb, the Ettrick Shepherd, Cary the Translator of Dante, Crowe the author of *Lewesdon Hill*, and others of more or less distinction have disappeared. And now of English Poets advanced in life, I cannot recall any but James Montgomery, Thomas Moore, and myself who are living, except the Octogenarian with whom I began. I saw Tennyson, when I was in London, several times. He is decidedly the first of our living Poets, and I hope will live to give the world still better things. You will be pleased to hear that he expressed in the strongest terms his gratitude to my writings. To this I was far from indifferent though persuaded that he is not much in sympathy with what I should myself most value in my attempts, viz. the spirituality with which I have endeavored to invest the material Universe, and the

LETTERS

moral relation under which I have wished to exhibit its most ordinary appearances. . . .

I have not left room to subscribe myself more than affectionately
yours

WM. WORDSWORTH.

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